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OUR CITY OF GOD

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BY

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(“J. B.”)

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“The poet says, ‘Dear City of Cecrops!’
And wilt not thou say, ‘Dear City of God?’”

—MARCUS AURELIUS.

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OUR CITY OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

WHEN Augustine, amid the fast approaching dissolution of the Empire, with the Vandals already in his native Africa, wrote the "De Civitate Dei," he worked upon a conception which perhaps strikes us most for its contrast with our own. With the world, as it seemed, going to pieces around him, he looked for consolation in the thought of a Church, a body of elect souls who, and who alone, would be saved from this wreck of all that was visible.

He makes an absolute dichotomy, to us terrible in its completeness, of the human race. On one side are the elect, found in all the six periods into which he divides world-history, from the Creation to the Second Advent. With the saints are included the elect angels, and these together make up the eternal kingdom, the heavenly Jerusalem, the abiding City of God. The host outside are a *massa perditionis*, whose very virtues are *splendida vitia*, and whose doom is the eternal fire. Within Christendom the Catholic Church was to rule the State, the function of the latter being that of hand-

maid and servitor. Under this *régime* the secular arm was to use compulsion against heretics and schismatics. Organised Catholicism was the sole depository of power. That is the world-picture according to Augustine.

It is one in which the brilliant light at the centre serves only to make more appalling the blackness of darkness that surrounds it. The modern mind cannot enjoy the splendours of this "City" for thinking of the too capacious dungeons beneath. A system which shuts out the greater half of the human race from any share in the good that is going, which instead hands them over to a predestinated ruin, has become for us plainly impossible. The fact is, Augustine brought too much of his early Manichæanism with him into Christianity. His "City of God" is too manifestly overtopped by the opposing "City of the Devil."

Yet with all its defects, what great and eternally true things are there in his conception! The view of world-history as the continuous unfolding of a Divine purpose; of world-policies, moralities, and economies as being rooted finally in spiritual principles; of the State as subordinate to an invisible power that is higher than itself—does not all this remain to us not only august and venerable, but as essentially valid? Augustinianism needs and has received in our time rigorous revision. But its root idea holds. It is the only one that covers humanity; that accounts for its history, and gives to its institutions and government their true basis.

In the present volume I have tried to follow this conception. But I have given to it the turn which

the modern consciousness demands. We see to-day truly a "City of God," but one built on broader foundations and with a mightier population than the one we read of in the African Father. Our *Civitas Dei* is Humanity itself. But not humanity alone. For us, as for Augustine, it is always man and God; humanity and the Divine Power that is forming humanity. With us as with him the ultimate solutions are religious. "It is surprising," exclaims Proudhon, "how at the bottom of our politics we always find theology!" That is and will be so. For theology, properly conceived, is not a shut-up compartment of things, but an all-embracing scheme, a true *scientia scientiarum*, holding in its scope all that belongs to the life of nations and of men.

That is the view offered in these pages. They begin with some chapters of definite theological statement; with a doctrine of God, of man, of Christ, of salvation, and allied topics. I have put these matters first, because in our time and country no complete scheme of living can dispense with some convictions about them. They form part of the ethical atmosphere which we breathe, and every member of the community, whatever his standpoint, must have his view of them. It will be seen that the themes treated of in this section bear special reference to controversies which are at the present time agitating our religious life. But the treatment has been not so much controversial as expository. It is not by calling each other names, but by getting at facts and the right deductions from them that we may hope to reach any

sure ground or any clear light on these high matters. What we want is not so much a New Theology as a True Theology ; and the progress towards it can only be in proportion as men seek and speak, not in the interests of this or that party, but solely that they may find and utter the thing which convinces their own mind and satisfies their own soul.

But, as our age is coming to see, in intimate alliance with these ultimate themes, inseparable from them in any conception of the world as a "City of God," are questions which have been left too long as the exclusive domain of the economist and the party politician. The Church, by its neglect of the social problem, has lost much of its position as a leader and guide of humanity. It will only regain it by recognising this question, and the solution of it, as a part of its evangel, as having their roots finally in the same spiritual principles as those which govern its formal theology. Our doctrine of society, as much as our doctrine of sin or salvation, enters into any true scheme of living. What is dawning upon the best religious minds is that the heavenly Jerusalem is not for ever to remain in the clouds. It is to be brought to earth and made visible to all men. We are far enough from this yet, and the distance between the ideal and its fulfilment measures the work which it is now for the Church to aid in accomplishing. The "City" will contain no slums. Its government will have found and put into practice the true doctrine of property, of labour, of dependence and independence. It will have created the system which permits the fullest development of the

individual life without violating the communal principles which hold society together. In the chapters devoted to this subject I have accordingly endeavoured to outline the main ideas which should govern our treatment of it. In "The Gospel of Work," "The Unprotected Classes," "The State and Happiness," "Independence," and allied topics I have sought the Christian solution of some of the social questions which press most closely upon us to-day.

After the social, the personal. For, as most of us discover sooner or later, it is this which in the long run counts most. The best social arrangements that human wit can arrive at enter only to a most limited degree into the business of high and happy living. When our "City" is as healthy, wealthy, and beautiful as a perfect arrangement can make it, the problem of each life in it, of its happiness or unhappiness, has received only the beginnings of an answer. For us everything begins and everything ends with the personal. Our third division is accordingly occupied with the varying sides of our separate and private problem. That is an exhaustless theme, and for the reason that under every conceivable future condition of our world the individual possibilities will be infinite in their variety, in their range of well- or ill-being. The final thing here is our own character. As individuals we shall never know ourselves as of the "City of God" until we have the mind and disposition which belong to its citizenship.

J. B.

LONDON, 1907.

Part I

THEOLOGICAL

I

Our Doctrine of Man

THE controversies which agitate the modern Church go a long way down. The world has suddenly waked to the fact that not surface matters, but the most fundamental principles of religious belief are in question. Ultimately we find that all these centre in our doctrine of man. The whole of theology is there. What we think of God, of Christ, of sin, of Church, of life beyond, comes back finally to what we think of man. Greek philosophy early recognised this, and has put it for us in its own incisive way. There was a kind of Hegelian evolution in its thought here. Said Protagoras, "Man is the measure of all things." "No," answered Plato, "God, the Divine Mind, is the measure of all things." Comes Aristotle, still later, with the thought that combines and reconciles the two: "It is the perfect man, in whom God's thought is clear, who is the measure of all things." And, so far as the ultimate truth of things can ever be a human possession, this Aristotelian dictum concerning it seems likely to be the final one.

If theology to-day is to restudy its positions it cannot do better than begin with man. For here

at least is a subject on which we do know something. It is the reproach against religious thought that it occupies itself so much with questions to which it has no satisfying answers. But man at least is knowable. If we are sure of anything, we are sure of ourselves. Here, at any rate, we can bring dogma to a test. We have not only our own mind and its verdicts to go upon, but an enormous accumulation of facts about other minds. This, which was true of earlier times, is especially true of ours. There never was an age so equipped for a study of humanity. In the light of modern knowledge we can no more accept unquestioned the earlier verdicts on this subject than we could accept the Ptolemaic astronomy. Of man's history as an animal and as a soul; of his physiology and his psychology; of the way in which his beliefs, his first theologies came to him; of the laws which have governed the development of his mind, in the successive stages of his progress; of his ethical history, the story of his falls, his recoveries, his crimes, his virtues; of the value and action in him of the spiritual faculty, and the results offered by his world-wide and age-long religious experiences—in all these and other directions we have such a science of man as no past age could pretend to. And to that science our theology is bound to conform itself.

If we now examine these new facts for what they yield us of doctrine, the first conviction they force upon us is that theology, instead of having reached a finality, is as yet only at its beginning. Our discoveries have so far only increased the

puzzle of life. Its curve is so immeasurably greater than we had imagined. Up to now the most conspicuous service of science has been to throw into an intenser relief the contrarities of our existence. It has allied us, in a way our fathers never dreamed of, to the animal kingdom. Here indeed it offers nothing to boast of. On this, the material side, Nature puts us on a level with her flies and beetles. On occasion she destroys us by the same methods and with the same indifference. In an earthquake our value, our consequence to the cosmos, appears to be that of an anthill. If life had no other side than this visible one our doctrine of man would be indeed a doctrine of despair; our philosophy "to eat and drink, since to-morrow we die."

But the facts of life which point to such a conclusion are met by another set, not less certain, far more august, which look in an opposite direction. These are the facts of the spirit and of the spiritual world. That their argument has been the more cogent, their appeal the more impressive, appears in this, that, spite of his brusque and nonchalant treatment by nature, spite of having been, in all his generations, the child of catastrophe, man has remained a believer, a cherisher of immortal hopes. The central thing about man is not that he can be crushed by earthquakes or smothered by volcanoes. It is that he is a spirit, a thinker. "Man is but the feeblest reed in nature," says Pascal, "but a reed that thinks." It is this side of him that appeals even to Schopenhauer. "Against the assertion that I am a mere modification of matter," he observes, "this must be insisted on, that all

exists merely in my idea." The thought kingdom within man is truly a wonderful thing. It is no accident or chance product, for it has its own immutable laws, at work in all the myriad minds of the race. Closely allied to matter, it shows in a thousand ways its independence of it and superiority over it. Shut in a tiny human body, it is big enough to hold the universe and all its worlds. In a second it can traverse infinity and eternity. So imperial, so divine is this possession that were his prospect annihilation man could never rank himself as other than a spiritual being. He would say with Henry More :

Yea, though the soul should mortal prove,
So be, God's life but in me move
To my last breath—I'm satisfied
A lonesome mortal god to have died.

There is next to be observed that man, resting, as to one side of his being, on natural laws that treat him with scant respect, finds himself on another set whose operation and significance are very different. One of these, a law which seems to dominate all others, is the law of progress. Against that man is mortal put this, that he is progressive. The individual dies, but the race moves forward. It is at this point that science and philosophy meet with a concordant message for theology. They remove the old limits from humanity—at both its ends. They revise our view as to where it begins and where it will finish. Evolution has so far concentrated itself largely upon human origins—has shown us the lowliness

of our birth. But it has another aspect which, in the coming time, will count for more than its doctrine of origins. Evolution has upward as well as downward implications, and it is here that, as we have said, it joins philosophy in a message to theology. Philosophy in the great Greek thinkers had anticipated evolution in its most important particular. Aristotle, in his doctrine of ends, had taught that a thing, a being, could not be judged from its beginning or its present appearance, but only in its completion, in the perfect type toward which it reached. You get no proper idea of an oak by examining an acorn or the young sapling. The application of this to humanity is a much bigger thing than an affair of acorn and oak. That man essentially is not what he is now simply, but all he is to be, is a truth which in the controversies of the hour is the one which most needs to be remembered, and the one most constantly forgotten.

The scientific view of man as constantly evolving, as moving from lower to higher, has, on both its sides, vital consequence for theology. On the lower side it touches its doctrine of sin, on the upper its doctrine of Christ. As to the first, the doctrine of the Fall, which belongs to Christian teaching, is a doctrine of science and philosophy as well as of the Bible. If the history of our race is, as modern thinking affirms, that of "an individual ever growing and ever learning," then a period came in its ascent when, as with a growing child, there arose in it the capacity of moral distinction, as compared with the earlier stages of mere animal instinct and appetite. That

was the age when ideals were born ; it was the age also when there came the first consciousness of sin. As Paul has it, " I had not known sin but by the law." It was when this law, this higher ethical sense, dawned on the human spirit that actions which seemed good to the earlier animalhood were now felt as bad. The brute " good " had been killed by the spiritual " better." The facts of evolution join, then, with the Genesis story of the Old Testament and with the Pauline argument of the New in affirming a Fall, a breach of the earlier ethical unity, as coming at the beginning of our spiritual history.

Evolution, while offering this contribution to the under side of our doctrine of man, makes a not less important one to its upper. From origins it passes to developments. After its journey backwards to what man has come from, it compels our thought forward to what he may grow to. When once more we ask our question, " What is man ? " we have to reaffirm with a new emphasis our philosophy of Becoming. Man is not simply what he is, but all he may yet be. And the prospect along these upper ranges of his nature opens plainly upon infinity. As we contemplate his history—the history of a being who through the ages more and more clearly exhibits himself as an organ of the Eternal Consciousness—we are compelled to an attitude of expectancy. We look for the next step. The process that has lifted this being from animal to human ; that has developed in him a soul, that has filled him with the sense of a spiritual kingdom of which he is part, will not stop there.

What will be the new departure? After humanising comes divinising. It is at this point that Christianity comes, with such impressive effect, into the story. Humanity, at its topmost level, opens itself to take in Christ. The Church, in all its history, led by a sure instinct, has stood at once for the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. As man in his earlier evolution contained in himself the vegetal and animal worlds combined with what was higher than they, so Jesus held all that was in man with something more. The most searching critics of modern times have to acknowledge that "something more." Harnack finds in the consciousness of Jesus a quality that is unique and transcendent. Wernle sees in the language of the New Testament concerning Him, the endeavour to put into words an experience that was beyond all existing categories and classifications. As Zeller puts it, "In the domain of the inner relations of Godhood and humanity, Christ has reached the extreme and unsurpassable stage of union." Schleiermacher, the noble-hearted thinker who combined in himself almost in its perfection the philosophic temper with the true Christian devotion, has put in unsurpassable language the truth we have been here striving to express: "Christ's work is a completion of the creation of human nature. In this sense of expressing the perfect consciousness of God, Jesus is Divine. He is not merely exemplary; He is archetypal (*urbildlich*). He is the manifestation in a definite Person of an eternal Act—the completion for which all that went before was preparation."

Of a doctrine of man, as viewed in the light of modern knowledge, this is necessarily the merest sketch. But we stop at its topmost note. Even such a hasty glance as we have given will be enough to show how sure are the grounds for faith. The researches of science, the verdicts of criticism, properly considered, serve only to throw into greater clearness the illimitable expanse of man's spiritual inheritance, the deep foundations of his immortal hope.

II

Our Doctrine of God

WERE there no man there would be no God. The statement may seem startling enough, but it is really, on this theme, the first thing we have to learn. Do not let it be misunderstood. The Ineffable Reality that is in and behind the Visible has been there from all eternity. But God, to us as human beings, is just as much as we know and can conceive of that Reality. Our manhood is our measure of Godhead. It is a measure which, always inadequate, is ever growing, and consequently it may with reverence be said that our God is ever growing. When Diderot cries "*Elargissez Dieu,*" he is speaking to the fact. It is in the light of this conception, the conception that God is for us a constant growth in the consciousness, that we understand many things that would otherwise everlastingly puzzle us. Rightly handled, it offers us the best of answers to the modern doubt.

For instance, writers like M. Guyau in France and Mr. Grant Allen and others in England have laboriously traced the evolution of the idea of God from the primitive notions of savage tribes,

as though this were an indictment. They show how man, in different stages of his development, has "made God after his own image," and imagine apparently that here is an anti-theistic argument. Their readers agree with them and consider the doctrine exploded; that, as a French writer puts it, "*l'hypothèse Dieu s'élimine.*" What it proves is simply that the savage has got as much of the reality in him as he could hold, and no more. The formula here might be: "As much man as you are, so much of God can you conceive."

It is precisely also from this standpoint we see the absurdity of the talk about Anthropomorphism, as though this were a reproach to belief. That is an old story. We remember the jest of Xenophanes—"that the lions, if they could have pictured a God, would have pictured him in fashion like a lion; the horses like a horse, the oxen like an ox." To-day the argument is revived in another form. We are told that in worshipping God as Father, in picturing Him as loving, chastising, forgiving, redeeming, we are acting as the lions and the horses; simply, that is, projecting into the heavens a magnified image of ourselves. We might answer this with a *tu quoque*. For the most arrant materialist and anti-theologist is, in his own theory, doing precisely the same thing. When he talks of force, of motion, of sequences, of attractions and repulsions, as explaining the system of things, he is, in his turn, simply projecting himself. His ideas of force, of causality, of attraction, are, just as much as the religious idea, derivatives of his consciousness. But our answer is not a *tu quoque*.

It is that in realising God in terms of our highest self we are doing the natural and only possible thing. This is as much of Him as we know because it is as much of Him as we are. When we are higher He will be higher to us. Our God-consciousness is, we repeat, the measure of our growth.

It is along this line also that we find our doctrine of Divine Incarnation. When Jesus spoke of losing life that we might find it, the word was true of God as well as of ourselves. The history of God, as far as we can see, is a history of losing that He might find Himself. In the German proverb God sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, wakes in the man. Creation is His humiliation and self-emptying. The stone holds and expresses all of Him that it can; the animal has more, and man most of all. God emerges into ever clearer self-expression according to the organs of body and soul that are there for Him. When Quaker George Fox said that "though he read of Christ and God he knew them only from a like spirit in his own soul," he was putting in his own way the precise truth we are here following. What he knew of God, he found, was God in him. It was thus that Jesus, in His supreme self-consciousness knowing His entire oneness with the Father, spoke and acted from that.

It is from the same standpoint we catch the meaning of the silence and seeming indifference of God. Man's incessant cry has been for Divine revelation. In ruder times he wanted it hot and hot, a vision in flaming heavens, or signs and wonders on the earth. Later, the aspiration, unanswered, appa-

rently, has turned to a tormenting doubt. It has been his astonishment and despair that the heavens

Make no disclosure
And the earth keeps up her terrible composure.

With the decay of the easy, old-world beliefs in sprite and fairy, in magic and witchcraft, in the constant play of the supernatural, man's loneliness in the universe has, we say, grown upon him. He looks from his island planet to the waste infinitude around him in search of neighbours and friends, and there are none in sight. The stars to him are

Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

But in this despair man is forgetting one thing. It is that there is Divine revelation, actually and incessantly going on, and that *he* is the organ of it. His own voice has in it the accent of eternity, and the more according to his height of soul. "The soul of God is poured into the world through the thoughts of men." Our own reason, as is plain to anyone who thinks, springs out of an Eternal Reason. That the outside world makes the same impression upon us all; that we call things by the same names; that we find in each of our minds the same laws of thought and feeling; all this points to a common, underlying source. Our separate minds are leaves of the same tree. And when, from our mind inward, we look outward on the world of visible things—the grass of the field, the stone in the road—we find them all embedded

in mind. They are thoughts hardened into matter. Why, then, talk of isolation? We live ever, did we know it, in the highest society. We are in immediate communication with the Eternal Mind.

But this Divine self-revelation goes on, as we have said, according to a fixed law—the law of growth. It is precisely according to our height that God opens Himself to us. Thus is it that we see a constant progress in the idea of God. A man's education, the age he belongs to, with its notions and prejudices, are his apparatus of observation. The difference in the apparatus makes all the difference in the object viewed. Jupiter to the naked eye is one thing; quite another to spectrum analysis and the Lick telescope. Hence the God of the Middle Ages is impossible to us. The instruments were imperfect and so reported badly. Anselm's theory of the Atonement in his "Cur Deus Homo" offers us a deity with the sentiments of a mediæval baron, jealous of personal honour, and determined to vindicate it with blood. This eleventh-century deity is not ours. So, too, in the long, fierce centuries during which power, mere force, was regarded as of itself the supreme right, the source of all authority; and when remorseless cruelty was considered a mere detail of its exercise, the doctrine of hell, as an underground furnace whose torturing flames enwrapped myriads of victims through all eternity, seemed natural enough. In the Roman Church this view appears still to subsist, for we read in a recent Jesuit book that "sinners in hell have asbestos souls to ensure their burning for eternity."

But the level to which the average religious mind of to-day has risen has made the God of such procedures impossible. To the modern ethical sense it is absurd to talk of force alone as making or conferring right. Giant strength is not of itself Godlike. Used for cruelty it is demonic. The mediæval hell was consonant with the feudal ferocity which enabled the baron to feast in his hall with the more gusto from the thought of his miserable captives in the dungeons underneath. Their God was in that image. We see with clearer eyes to-day. Revelation has advanced in us to the point of exhibiting ethic as supreme over mere power. The eternal energy at the back of the universe could doubtless create hells a million times hotter than the centre of the sun. But energy of itself is not God; no, nor the greatest part of Him. God's hell, whatever it may be, must be full of God's righteousness and full of His love. We might cite here a conversation with an earnest Christian man who discussed once this subject with us. We put the following queries: "Do you believe that God is everywhere?" "Yes." "Wherever He is He is there in the fulness of His nature?" "Certainly." "And you believe that God is Love?" "Yes." "Then surely you have enough there for your doctrine of hell? For if God is everywhere He is certainly in hell. And in hell as the Father, whose nature is Love."

When we speak of God as Father—the great word of Jesus concerning Him—we come to another corner-stone of our doctrine—the element of personality. Here, again, we are told we are projecting

on to the sky a gigantic image of ourselves. The Infinite, it is affirmed, cannot be personal, because personality implies limitation. To which we reply the limitation is the objector's, not ours. When we talk of personality, do these people suppose we mean *our* personality? Enough that it meets ours and knows ours. The ultimate Reality is the source of our love, of our justice, of our forgiveness, just as it is the source of our mind and reason, and of our physical force. But love, justice, forgiveness are functions of a Person. The limitation of it is one in our own minds. The Personality that on one of its sides reaches down to the plane of our consciousness, is no more limited by this contact than is the Pacific by the islets round which its waves sweep.

It is impossible to explain this universe apart from personality, and every attempt to do so only ties the experimenter in a tangle of contradictions. Apart from it we find no intelligible beginning and no intelligible end. It is indeed along all the sides of our personality that we touch God and are made conscious of His presence. The intellect is our poorest proof of Him. It is when we love, suffer, labour, serve, forgive, that we are surest of God. We know Him in these things as our other higher part; it is from these affectional and moral riches of His being that we draw our strength. It is curious what blunders are made on this theme by our cleverest men. Mr. Bernard Shaw has been recently telling us "he did not believe in a God who forgave. Nothing could be forgiven." One wonders how

the word "forgive" ever came into our dictionaries if there be no such thing in existence? We have here simply the vulgar confusion between cause and effect in the physical sphere and the free movement of volition in the spiritual. Because an action, a crime, shall we say, produces its inevitable series of results, and that, whatever may pass in the mind of the wrongdoer, we are asked to disbelieve in the possibility and actuality of forgiveness. As a matter of fact, we are continually proving the contrary. Our word is not in the dictionary by accident. Mr. Shaw is confusing the meaning of words. What *is* forgiveness? Not assuredly that reversal of natural laws which he seems to suppose. It is a transaction of the moral and volitional being. To take Ritschl's definition: "Pardon is an act of will by which there is cancelled that aspect of an injury received which interrupts intercourse between the injured person and the offender." When we know God as personal we realise, though the laws of His universe go on in uninterrupted operation, how He whom we grieve by our sin can and does forgive.

We see now in what sense our paradox at the beginning holds good. When we say that without man there were, for us, no God, we are simply putting in another way the formula that God's revelation to us is in us. And the revelation is continuous. Spinoza's doctrine, that the Universe, because it is in itself the Infinite Being, can know no such thing as ends, or progress, being perfect as it is, does not satisfy the facts. The Cosmos is a deeper thing than Spinoza's mathematics.

Calvin's great word, "*Pie hoc potest dici Deum esse Naturam*" ("One may say with reverence that God is Nature"), has to be taken with a reservation which he himself held. For God is Nature, and more. Evolution, if it means anything, means a progression. Is not the greatest thing we are reaching to-day this, that out of evolution is emerging a doctrine of God which sees Him as the perfect worker behind a perfecting Universe, a Universe which, under His hand, is becoming the ever truer, the ever more adequate expression of Himself? We adore the God whose infinite splendours we see. But these are not His perfection. That belongs to a realm which eye hath not seen nor ear heard; the disclosure of whose treasures will be the occupation of eternity.

III

The Incarnation

WHEN we speak of the birth of Christ we can imagine someone asking, "Which birth?" It is the wonder of Jesus that He is being perpetually reborn. Each generation incarnates Him anew, clothes Him in the flesh and blood of its own life and thought. As we glance back through the ages we see a procession of Christ-figures successively filling the scene, each different from the others, yet always with a mystic likeness that tells us it is He. Starting from the apostolic time, what transformations do we behold! We pass from the first to the second century to find ourselves amid the gigantic phantasies of Gnosticism. Christ is here one of the interminable chain of shadowy beings conjured up by the fevered Eastern imagination. As we study them in the pages of Irenæus and Tertullian, our brain reels as though we had been caught in a dance of Dervishes. Later comes the Christ conceived in the Platonised minds of Alexandrian Clement and Origen. Next we have the Christ of the great creeds, the Christ of the Greek metaphysics. Further down, as we approach the dark ages, we see the historic Jesus still further

receding from the view, the compassionate Son of Man yielding place to a stern and terrible being, a *rex tremendae majestatis*, whose wrath is turned aside by the intercession of His Virgin Mother. There was a time in mediæval Christianity when Christ seemed indeed obliterated almost from the popular mind. Thorpe, in his "Ancient Laws and Institutions of England," gives this direction: "Pray first to St. Mary and the holy apostles, and the holy martyrs, and to all God's saints. . . . And end by signing yourself and by saying your Pater-Noster." The Founder was lost in His own institution.

There have been other rebirths since then, of which we have no time to speak. Let us come to our own day. For our age, too, has had its Nativity, has welcomed a new-born Christ. Jesus dominates the modern consciousness. His is still "the name above every name." But His form differs for us with all the difference between our age and those behind it. The garments in which Gnostics, Platonists, Nicene creed-makers, Mediævalists, Puritans successively clad Him have dropped away. He is to us other than these presentations, and for the reason that we see Him with other eyes. We are here under a law against which it is useless to strive, for it is that which binds us and the universe together. The law is that the world and all things in it change as we change. Earth, air, fire and water are quite different things to us from what they were to our fathers, who thought of them as the four elements. And history has changed just as much as fire and water, and for the same reason. In this, as in other

departments, the raw material shows a new aspect to the new instruments. We sweep the past, as we sweep the heavens, with telescopes, and the results in the one case are not less remarkable than the other. The facts of history under this inspection take on a fresh aspect ; and besides, we have a new universe into which to fit them. Thus is it that the Christ comes to us to-day clad in the new garments of our making, as a rebirth in our special consciousness. Paul, Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, Wesley saw their Jesus. What Jesus do *we* see ?

Here, we have just said, is a question of vision, and we have accordingly first of all to note the development that has come in that quarter. The eye with which we now view the past is an eye charged with certain powers that are comparatively late acquisitions. We work, for instance, with a new historic sense, with a new principle known as evolution, with a definite philosophy of history, with a new conception of personality. And every one of these acquisitions affects in the most vital way our knowledge of Christ and of the Incarnation. This is not to say that we have reached certainties on all points. One of the first results from the new methods was indeed to create a sense of confusion and of uncertainty. A freshly won power begins generally by maiming and slaying. If we ever fly there will be a holocaust of early victims. We begin our new eras with blunderings and catastrophes, and this has been specially true in the sphere of religion. Evolution, for instance, stumbled first into materialism. It swept the unseen world bare of inhabitants. Not only had goblins and

fairies disappeared ; there was no room for personality anywhere. Incarnation and Divine visitations were out of the question, for there was no Divinity left. Matter, force and law were the only trinity—a trinity with which it was clearly impossible to get on speaking terms. But we are emerging from that most dismal of conclusions. Science, as Wundt, one of her most distinguished sons, declares, “ can only indicate the path which leads to territories beyond her own, ruled by other laws than those to which her realm is subject.” And in those further realms, where philosophy enters, the truth most visible to the best minds to-day is the ubiquitous presence and supremacy of personality. It is realised as the top and bottom of everything, the one element that gives significance to life and makes it intelligible. The latest science, joining hands here with philosophy, finds the universe, instead of being a mere unconscious mechanism, to be, in the words of Professor Shaler, “ a realm of unending and infinitely varied originations. Into the equation is continually going the influential qualities of newly-formed individualities, and from it is continually being drawn those that pass away.”

This doctrine of personality and of “ new originations ”—the doctrine, in other words, of the universe as spiritual and as ever developing—carries us a long way in the direction of our theme. Conjoined with it, as a still further help, let us take now another of our instruments of vision, our present-day philosophy of history, our view, that is, of humanity as a whole. The world is now in full possession of the idea that history is no mere collection of isolated

facts, but that it represents an organised and definite movement towards an ascertainable end. History is, in short, the record of the spiritualisation of humanity. Augustine, as we have said, in his "City of God," worked on that principle, though he restricted it to only one portion of the race. Pascal, in his great saying that human history was as the story of a single individual ever growing and ever learning, put the idea into its modern form, the form which was developed with such prodigality of illustration by Lessing, by Herder, by Hegel, in short, by the whole of the German illuminati. It is now no longer a German speculation, but the property of the race. It is at the back of all our thinking about man. The late Archbishop Temple worked it into his much-discussed essay on "The Education of the Human Race." Lamennais, in his "*Paroles d'un Croyant*," carried it to the extreme of representing humanity as in itself the incarnation of God, the eternal victim, bearing its cross, ascending its Calvary, offering its expiation.

We speak of this as extreme, and yet it was a hint of the truth. For it is now perceived that we cannot separate our thought of God from our thought of man. We remember Kant's definition of the Son of God, as humanity in its moral perfection. In our dissection of the inner spiritual consciousness, whether of the individual or of the race, we find it more than ever difficult to say where the human ends and the Divine begins.

Draw if thou canst the mystic line
Severing rightly His from thine,
Which is human, which Divine.

And it is noteworthy, in all that world-wide doctrine of the Trinity, which, in differing forms, we find in India, in ancient Babylonia, in Egypt, in the Neo-Platonists, in the Jewish Kabbala, to emerge finally as a foundation principle of the Hegelian philosophy, we have always the "Word," the manifestation, that is, of the formless abyss of Deity, becoming incarnate in the sphere of the visible, of space and time. The idea is rooted in the world, and gains strength by every advance of scientific knowledge and of philosophic thought, that humanity stands for more than is now visible; that it is grounded on something mightier than itself; that it is an organ of a greater voice than its own; that it is open to vast "new originations," to continual advances in the spiritual order; that its present appearance is chiefly a prophecy of what it is yet to become.

When, therefore, we find Christianity putting in its forefront a doctrine of Incarnation, and proclaiming the historical Jesus as Divine, we find ourselves in presence, not of a suddenly launched, isolated claim, but of a continuity, both of idea and of experience, which must command our attention. Observe on what the claim is based. We need to come back here, not to late tradition, but to beginnings and to first principles. It has been a mistake of orthodoxy, from which it is time Christian thought finally rid itself, to base its doctrine of Incarnation on the notion of a virgin birth. It is here that, as against earlier thinking, the modern historic sense asserts itself. From the old view of Scripture which regarded the Bible as homogeneous, in all its parts

of equal value, that sense has brought us back to the facts. We see the New Testament as the first age saw it. In the apostolic time these writings were not regarded as Scripture at all, but as the free expression, differing in value, of individual Christian opinion. Modern scholarship passes through these writings to their sources, from the later additions to the original material. In this appraisal the birth stories of Matthew and Luke fail to approve themselves as of authority. They stand alone. Mark, whose gospel is now generally recognised as the earliest of the four, knows nothing of these events, nor are they mentioned in the fourth gospel. Jesus Himself, in all His recorded utterances, lets drop no word about them. St. Paul, whose Christology is of the loftiest, from whom above all others the Church has taken its doctrine of Jesus as the Divine Redeemer and Saviour, nowhere bases or props his doctrine on these or similar stories. Could he have omitted them had he heard of or believed them? He begins his great Epistle to the Romans with a contrary affirmation, declaring that "Jesus Christ our Lord" . . . "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." He was made to be "the Son of God with power," not by His birth, but "by the resurrection from the dead." This is precisely the position taken in the early chapters of the Acts, where, in the reputed utterances of St. Peter, which form unquestionably a very early Christian tradition, Jesus is declared to be "a man approved by God among you," and "whom God had raised up, having loosed the pains of death."

The birth narratives of Matthew and Luke, which stand thus solitary, so strangely unsupported by the earliest and most authoritative witnesses, bear also in themselves the plainest marks of their late origin. So clumsily have they been compiled that the genealogies which have been tacked on to them actually derive Christ's royal descent through Joseph. It is noteworthy here also that the MS. discovered by Mrs. Lewis in the Sinaitic convent gives the reading of Matthew i. 16 as, "Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus who is called the Christ." Besides, the two narratives are so flatly contradictory. The conditions they describe are absolutely different. Matthew gives us a state of terrorism at Bethlehem and Jerusalem, with Herod commanding a slaughter of the innocents, with Joseph and Mary fleeing into Egypt to escape his bloodthirsty hands. Luke, in contrast to this, paints a picture of idyllic calm. So far from infant murders, from concealment, and from a terror-stricken flight we have the mother of Jesus going with her babe publicly to the temple, showing her child to the authorities, and making there the offerings commanded by the law!

One need not add to these arguments. We might, indeed, have dilated on the absurdity of the old Protestant position, which made the virgin birth the safeguard of the doctrine of Christ's sinlessness, forgetting that the human taint, if it did not affect Him through Joseph, assuredly, according to their view, reached Him through Mary. The Catholics, with their doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception,

are at least more logical. But enough, surely, has been said for a revision on this point of our doctrine of Incarnation. It is time, we repeat, that the Church's thought should abandon this untenable position, and should instead put itself once more in line with our earliest and most authoritative New Testament Scripture. It is time we once more based our Christology where Paul and Peter and John and the Master Himself based it. What was good enough doctrine for the apostles and the first believers should be good enough for us.

What then, in this view, is the Christian Incarnation? It is, as the New Testament puts it, "God manifest in the flesh." And not the less so that the manifestation is under strictly human conditions. In Jesus, "our divinest symbol," humanity enlarged its boundaries to take in Divinity. The "new originations," of which modern science speaks, found here their sublimest example. We have only to read the Life depicted in the Gospels to realise how, entering into all the human conditions, it at every point transcended them; how it lifted the experiences and possibilities of living up to a new scale; how it compels us to say with Origen that "Jesus was united to God in the most essential manner"; with Theodore of Mopsuestia, that "God in Him was not simply immanent, but that the spirit of Jesus so perfectly appropriated the Divine as to become one with it;" with Fichte, that "Jesus is in a wholly peculiar manner the only-begotten and first-born Son of God"; and with Ritschl, that He represents to us "the religious

value of God.” We do not, we have said, in the spiritual evolution know where man ends and God begins. But as we study Jesus in His life and death, and in the power of His Resurrection, what we do know is that here God and man are manifestly one.

IV

The Gospels and Miracle

THE time has arrived for an entire openness of treatment on this and allied subjects. There is a notion abroad that the modern theological mind is too dexterous in concealments; that the popular preacher has an exoteric doctrine for the pulpit, and an esoteric doctrine, of a quite different complexion, for himself and his intimates. Without discussing here the morality of an attitude of that kind, we may say at once that it is an economy for which we at least have no use. In religion, as in any other subject, if a teacher is to be of any genuine service to his fellows it will be by telling them the best and truest he knows, by speaking from the farthest height he has reached. That is so in science, and it will have to be so in theology. There is no virtue in concealment, and the age is sick of it. The reproach which Mark Pattison hurled at the England of a generation ago that "it contained no public for a scientific treatment of theology" no longer holds. The best men of all communions are with Pascal in his declaration that "the highest of Christian truths is that truth should be loved above all." Let us in this spirit try to ascertain the present-day aspect of our question.

Most scholars, whatever their standpoint, would admit, to begin with, that our age is in a position far more favourable than any other for forming upon it a competent opinion. We have absorbed the lessons of the past—the lessons of its aggressive criticisms, of its reactions of faith, of the mistakes made on both sides—in attack and defence. We have new light on history, on the way it has been made; new light on the working, at different stages of its growth, of the human mind; we have a science of myth and legend, of the way they arise and develop; we have a fresh psychology, with its openings into the mysterious forces of the soul. And we have a philosophy which, after a period of confusion, is at last assigning the proper limits of science, as an authority on life's ultimate problems.

These gains and growths, where they have been really assimilated, create in serious thinkers an attitude towards our question which is at once critical and constructive. It is an attitude that has outgrown both the scepticisms and the orthodoxies of former days. Their "yes" and "no" are absorbed into a larger synthesis. The scornful rejections of a Voltaire, a Diderot and a Condorcet are, in the light of modern investigation, as impossible as the open-mouthed credulity of the dark ages. The arguments for and against on this matter form altogether a prodigious and at first sight a very bewildering accumulation, and it is only by a careful sifting of both that we can see the way to any sane conclusion.

The history of this controversy is a comparatively brief one. Christendom, torn from the

beginning by countless dissensions, was up to quite a late period practically unanimous about its miracles. Belief in them was easy, because it coincided with a certain phase, not then outgrown, of the human development. Every religion, every history of the early world produced them, and for the reason that it was the nature of the mind, at its then stage, to produce them. They grew in this soil as naturally as wheat grows to-day in a Midland shire. But a stage was reached when the production ceased. And that not because the outside world had changed. The change was in minds and thoughts. And now, instead of pious wonder stories, each more astonishing than the last, with which to regale the faithful, we have a Conyers Middleton, from the bosom of the Church of which he was a divine, opening a daring inquiry into these stories, accusing the Church fathers of wholesale forgery, of falsifying history, of adopting to the fullest extent the system of pious frauds. There follows Hume with his famous argument of the credibility of miracle-evidence. "We have no experience of the breaking of natural laws; we have every experience of the credulity and liability to error of human narrators of such occurrences." And then Strauss with his elaborate doctrine of the myth and its applications to the New Testament.

It would be absurd for anyone to minimise the importance of these later movements of the human mind. They were natural movements, as irresistible as the tides or the march of the seasons. The science of comparative mythology has settled for us a host of questions in this sphere. It has established

with the utmost certainty the way in which at certain stages of its progress the mind of man works, the way in which it views the world and events. As Crozier, in his "Civilisation and Progress," puts it, "It is a law that when natural causes are unknown events are attributed to the agency of wills like our own. As the causes are discovered the wills disappear." Accordingly, when to-day we deal with witnesses of events, especially uncommon events, our first business is to inquire into their mental character, into the kind of observing apparatus they bring to bear. The account of an eclipse given severally by an Australian savage and by a European astronomer would be in each case the genuine observation of an actual fact. But what a different story they would make of it! The one, awed and terror-stricken, talks of an avenging Power blotting out the sun in his wrath; the other, who has been taking photographs and making calculations, relates the particulars of what to him and his circle is an entirely natural and foreseen occurrence.

It is impossible to keep this question of the character and competence of the witnesses out of our study of the New Testament miracles. The modern man is quite entitled to ask—and he *will* ask, with or without our leave—whether what actually happened in Judæa, in the lifetime of Jesus, would, if witnessed by an observer with the mental equipment of a modern scientist, have been recorded after the fashion of our Gospels? But that is not the only question. The Gospel records, as we have them, are not even the accounts of the first-hand witnesses.

The earliest of these records is separated by at least a generation from the occurrences it narrates. Criticism, as we know, has made the most of this fact. Examples have been adduced from history of the way in which, amongst simple peoples, a plain narration has in the course of a few decades blossomed into a miracle-story. A famous instance is that of Francis of Assisi and the chroniclers of the thirteenth century. The account of him given in the "*Speculum Perfectionis*" by his friend and contemporary Frater Leo is of historical value. But the life of the saint written by Bonaventura, just a generation after, is stuffed with the incredible. An instance still more remarkable, because so close to our own day, is the story of the Babist prophet Ali Mohammed, the seer of Shiraz, held by his followers to be a kind of Messiah, and who was executed in 1850, at the age of thirty. There have appeared since his death two lives of him—one by a contemporary, Mirza Jani, who was himself martyred in 1852, and another published in 1880 by two disciples. A comparison of the two is the most suggestive of studies in the development of legend. The latter "History" is entirely on the plane of the miraculous, including even a transfiguration of the prophet in 1846, on his way from Shiraz to Teheran. And yet this wonder-story appeared in the lifetime of Ali's widow! True indeed is it, as Sir Richard Burton says, that "miracles grow apace in the East, and a few years suffice to mature them."

The great trouble of the modern investigator is, then, the haziness of the old-world witnesses as to the

difference between a fact and an imagination. To reach our fact we have to struggle through two thick fog-banks. First, there is that of the secondhand, hearsay character of much of our evidence. In pre-scientific times the story as it passes from mouth to mouth continually changes form. It does so according to a regular law of the primitive mind. It was an early perception of this law which led Euhemerus to his shrewd suggestion, adopted by many modern thinkers, that the Pagan deities were really pre-historic heroes whose deeds had been magnified by hearsay into the legends of Olympus. But when we have got through this fog-wall; when, through the region of second or third hand reports we have reached our first-hand witness, we are not even then in clear daylight. Our first-hand witness may have a fog in his own brain. What is his capacity of seeing the thing before him, and of reporting it? We remember our Australian and the eclipse. People see according to what they carry in their minds. That good Chinese Buddhist Hiouen-Tsang declares that Buddha's footprint "appears of more or less size according to the greater or less faith of the beholder." Exactly. It is this "faith" of the early beholder which is the problem of the modern observer. How much of what he reports is "faith," and how much fact? We remember the story told by Erasmus of a party riding to Richmond, when a wag of the company stopped suddenly and stared into the sky. "God avert this prodigy!" "What?" "Can you not see that large dragon there with the horns of flame, and tail hooped into a circle?"

“No.” Finally one, dreading to be thought short-sighted or blockish, said he saw it. Then the others in quick succession. In three days the report ran through the land of a great portent!

Here, then, we have the modern difficulty. The world is what it was, but the mind of man is not what it was. It has attained to a perception of law, of the relation of cause to effect, of the uniformity of nature, to which the early world was a stranger. And this difference of mind has thrown us into a new attitude towards the primitive histories. We can no longer take them at their face value. We deduct a heavy discount, the discount of their psychological element.

We have now to inquire as to how far this modern attitude, and the criticism that has arisen out of it, affects the question of miracle as a feature of Christianity. Faced with our difficulty, we find a variety of attitudes toward it recommended to us from different quarters. There is that of turning our heads away from such questions as beyond our competence. We are to accept the thing as it stands because the Church says so. We are to enthrone Authority in the place of reason, and cry with Tertullian, “*Credo quia impossibile!*” This is the Roman demand, and we see the condition to which it has brought religion on the Continent. How this conflict between reason and authority works inside the Church is shown in the case of a scholar like the Abbé Loisy, who, in his capacity of critic, after subjecting the New Testament to an analysis which reduces everything to pure naturalism, tells his hearers to accept, as Catholics, what he has

been instructing them to deny as students ! When we inquire more closely as to what this " Church authority " really amounts to, we shall probably come to the conclusion of the first Napoleon at the end of his prolonged discussions with the Roman hierarchy over the Concordat. After interrogating one dignitary after another, from the Pope downwards, on questions of faith, his final word about it all was : " Each Catholic priest has in reality his own religion. The Pope's is different from that of the Cardinals, and these do not agree among themselves in religious matters."

But if we decline this way of meeting our question, are we compelled to the opposite one, of revolt and wholesale rejection ? Must we join the Diderots and the D'Holbachs ? Are we to say with Condorcet, " there is not a religious system or a piece of supernatural extravagance that does not rest on ignorance of natural laws " ? On the contrary, we believe that the encyclopædists are as much outgrown as the mediævalists ; that the deniers and the assertors come alike short of their fact ; though the two, while they failed to reach it, were moving in its direction, as the twin arms of the sculler, working on opposite sides of the boat, each propel it towards its goal. The mind, by its very constitution, must go on asking its questions and demanding answers. Let us see to what its resistless process, operating on our problem, has brought us to-day.

First of all, it is to be noted that we cannot treat this special New Testament question apart from its relation to some others. Truth is one, because the Universe is one. And so what has happened

in any part of the Universe, if its innermost meaning is to be reached, must be studied in connection with the whole. We need then, at the beginning, to take a far look, and to ask how the entire cosmic scheme, as far as we can see into it, appears in regard to the questions we are raising. Modern philosophy, for one thing, has taught us how cautious we should be as to arbitrary verdicts resting on appearances. Inquirers here might study with advantage—it would be for them a capital exercise in dialectics—works such as Bradley's "Appearance and Reality," and Herbert Spencer's "First Principles." Here they would find, on reason's own showing, the limitations of reason. They would find how our fundamental working ideas—those of time, space, motion, causality—when analysed, show as absolutely self-contradictory. Our reason works up to a certain point and then stops—or proceeds to refute itself. Anyone who has explored these heights comes back with the feeling that behind our logic is a deeper one; that our apparatus measures only a few feet down into the fathomless ocean; that life, as it wells from the fountains of being, is something so infinitely subtler than all our syllogisms.

When, with all that in mind, we come closer to our topic, we discover next that Science, which has destroyed so many of the older grounds of belief, has been not less busy creating new ones. It has given us for one thing a new definition of miracle, a fresh thought to bring to the interpretation of the New Testament "*semeion*." Old Hobbes, long ago, in his "*Leviathan*," pointed out that the same

thing might be a miracle to one man and not to another. He saw, as we now see, that it is a question of personality. Science, in its enormous widening of the reign of law, has at the same time opened to us the immeasurable possibilities of personality. And it is, we say, personality that is at the root of miracle. This, in both the ancient and modern conception of it. According to what we know and are, does the miraculous lie in us. The civilised man who lands on a savage island and, in sight of its untutored inhabitants, kills a bird at a hundred yards by bending his finger on a trigger, is to them a wonder-worker. He has accomplished all they understand by a miracle. He has shown himself a being beyond their capacity of being. What he has done, however, is no infraction of law. It is simply a result of the knowledge of law. And here, talking of laws, we perceive emerging another law—this, namely, that the higher the grade of personality the more complete, and to lower natures the more miraculous, will be his power over Nature. And that always, not by contradicting her, but by knowing her. Could a judge or chronicler of the first century be imagined as witnessing what we see to-day; could he see a motor whizzing at twenty miles an hour without visible means of traction, or invisible molecules in a Crookes' tube beating by their impact a mass of metal into white heat, he would write it all down as miracle. And so it would be—to him. Not so to the chauffeur, or to Sir William Crookes.

Personality, then, we say, is at the top and bottom of everything. Get the quality of it high enough

and there is nothing we may not expect from it. Nature herself is the expression of personality. Thought and will are the ultimate ground of her existence. A Schopenhauer and a Hartmann acknowledge that. Your pebble, your piece of chalk, are but the outer crust of ideas; their existence, their qualities, cannot be conceived apart from thought. They are embedded in mind. And as Nature exists by the thought behind her, so she obeys thought made visible here, in humanity, in proportion to the height of that humanity.

All this has brought us, by a somewhat circuitous route perhaps, to the personality of Christ, and the relation of Christ to the New Testament miracles. What He did upon this earth is partly a question of evidence, and partly a question of His quality of being. As to the evidence, we have made all the admissions concerning it which the severest criticism demands. For ourselves we are prepared to admit the possibility of a legendary element having crept into the Gospels, and coloured certain of the accounts there of His doings. A guaranteed human infallibility is not, and never has been, included in the schedule of the Divine education of man. How much is to be deducted from the Gospel story on this account is a matter which, in the present state of our knowledge, we should not, ourselves, care dogmatically to pronounce upon.

But no one will be in a position to form a proper judgment here who has not previously taken into account certain considerations. We can, to some extent, judge of what we do not know by what we do know. And we have in this matter one certainty

to start with. That is the impression made by Jesus upon His disciples and upon their successors through all the following ages. You calculate the intensity of a force by its effects. The propulsive quality of a new explosive is shown by the distance to which it hurls the shot. If we try in this way to measure the quality of Jesus, the sheer power of His personality, we are at a loss to put a limit to it. It created a devotion to Him, a worship of Him, which has never ceased, and the like of which has not been seen. It founded a religion which has changed the world. If the Gospel narratives are exaggerations, we have to account for the feeling which produced the exaggeration, which compelled these people to speak in superlatives.

The question for us here, be it remarked, is not how Jesus came to be what He was, the actual process which brought Him as a personality into our world. The controversy as to the Virgin Birth is not, as we have before said, of the importance which some attribute to it. The point is not how things come to be, but what they are. Processes are mere details. When we see radium at work the thing that strikes us is not chiefly how it got here—the way in which pitch-blende and other materials have been handled so as to produce this result. The supreme matter is not the genesis of radium, but radium. It is the new power that has emerged, this extract of extracts, which by its sheer superb quality of being accomplishes its effortless miracles, that holds us enthralled. And so with Jesus. He Himself says nothing about His birth, nor does St. Paul. Had it been one of the things

that mattered we should have looked for some word.

But the word was not needed. His being is the miracle just as radium is the miracle. In the two cases, in the higher realm of spirit, as in the lower realm of the physical, we have the emergence of a new power that works according to its character. In each there are effects that transcend the effects accomplished by lower grades. With what scornful incredulity should we, a few years ago, have met the suggestion of a mere atom containing force enough to keep a clock ticking through tens of thousands of years! The suggestion is not laughed at to-day. And if the region of the visible gives us these wonders, what reason have we for rejecting similar possibilities in the more potent realm behind, the realm of the invisible, of the spirit? Give us here a quality of being high enough, and we shall not be so foolish as to dogmatise on what it can or cannot do. Radium is, to our present observation, a break in the history of matter. The Gospel story is a break in the history of spirit. The world's record as disclosed to us by science has prepared us for phenomena of this kind. It shows us on the natural plane periods of steady progress interspersed at long intervals with breaks, with vast upheavals, with fresh, wonderful developments of the life-process. The first spin given to the nebulous gas, the beginning of life on the earth, the appearance of man upon it, are starting-points of this kind—red-letter dates in eternity's calendar, new chapters of the cosmic story. And if this is the course of things on the lower, physical plane, may we not

expect its analogue in the realms of the mind and the soul? Here, as in that other region, we look for the steady humdrum movement, continued till it has run out its hour, reached its farthest limit, and there touched the spring which releases another mystery of power. From pitch-blende we arrive at radium; from centuries of Jew legalism we come out upon the Christ.

It is to some such point as this that modern research, moving through all its departments, seems to conduct us. The writers of our Gospels are simple-minded persons who bring us a report, couched in their own language, of an unparalleled phenomenon in the spiritual world. Their description bears all the marks of the time and place from which it derives. It is coloured by the prepossessions, and characterised by the limitations of an unscientific age. But through all this shines the tremendous Fact itself; what is more, through all this pours to-day upon us, undiminished, the spiritual power inherent in that Fact. And the force it contains is a redeeming force. Jesus is still the soul's miracle. His attraction is perennial, and whomsoever He attracts He uplifts and purifies. As to physical signs and wonders, though we cannot in that sphere measure His power, it was not upon these He put the emphasis. Nor need we. He was capable of so much greater things—the things He accomplished and does now accomplish in the minds and hearts of men. What need for further witness? Who hath seen Him hath seen the Father. In Him we read the Divine secret. Union with Him is union with God.

Our Doctrine of Sin

IN the great intellectual resettlement which the Christian consciousness owes to itself in our time there is perhaps no outstanding account more pressing than that of its doctrine of sin. What is that doctrine, and how does it relate itself to the facts and realities of our modern world? It is on this subject, we are told, that science and theology come most definitely into collision. Christianity, it is said, bases itself on the dogma of a Fall; science, on the contrary, asserts that the human history is that of a perpetual rise. A Continental school of philosophy, headed by Nietzsche, goes further. It makes the consciousness of sin to be a kind of disease, which man has caught by the way and which he must get rid of. It came in with the change he experienced when he passed from the wild into the social state. It is analogous to the feeling the water animals had when compelled to become land animals. The special type of evolution-philosophy represented by Fiske approaches the theme from yet another point of view. "Theology," says he, "has had much to say about original sin. This original sin is neither

more nor less than the brute inheritance which every man carries with him; and the process of evolution is an advance towards true salvation." Modern philosophic idealism, so far as it follows Hegel, also has its challenge to the average Christian thought, by its practical denial of human freedom, treating, as it does, our personality as a phase of the absolute consciousness which is here going through its series of necessary processes. And as if there were not enough already on our hands, we have modern investigation opening up for us the whole story of sacrifice and ritual in relation to sin, as it has developed through the ages, and asking us how the Church dogma on these points looks in the new light?

In discussing this theme we cannot do better than begin with a little history. How did the world come by its notions of sin and demerit? The record is curiously mixed. From the beginning men everywhere have a right and a wrong, but their "right" and "wrong" are often to us so utterly strange. Amongst the Tupinambas of Brazil the saints, who will reach their heaven as having "lived well," are those who have well avenged themselves and eaten many enemies. In the religion of ancient Babylon we find in the Incantation Tablets, amid curses directed against definite immoralities, others equally pronounced against "pointing with the finger at fire," and "sitting facing the sun." In those uncounted millions of the human race, who through scores of generations have filled the vast Chinese empire, there seems never to have been a consciousness of

sin in the usual Christian sense. In the teaching of Confucius, and later of Mencius, man has no need of grace, for he is not inherently bad. He is, to use Lord Palmerston's famous phrase, "born good," and requires only proper instruction and favouring circumstance to develop what is in him. In ancient Greece we find philosophy at loggerheads with theology. The old religion confused the moral issues by its villainous deities, who incited men to abominable crimes, which they then punished in an abominable way. We have Socrates, on the other hand, identifying virtue with knowledge. A man is vicious because he does not know better. Sin is moral unskilfulness, a kind of folly. It is worth noting in this connection that the Greek word in our New Testament which stands for "sin," *hamartia*, means in its first, classical acceptation, just a failure, a missing of the mark.

We need to bear in mind these various attitudes as to sin in order to estimate accurately the teaching and spirit of Christianity. Unquestionably the Gospel brings to the theme a new and deeper note. At the same time, it simplifies the issue. The heathen doctrine of sin was largely a doctrine of taboo. You might, as did the Assyrian kings, burn or impale your captives, and glory in it, but you must not "point your finger at the fire." Sin, as often as not, was the offending of ridiculous or immoral deities, to be placated by something equally ridiculous and immoral. Jesus would have nothing to do with the taboo notion. He had no use for ceremonialism. He did not believe, as

priests in every generation have believed, in creating fancy theological diseases to be cured by fancy theological remedies. With Him sin was bad ethic. It was the contradiction of life's highest law—the law of love. It was the wounding by this means of your neighbour and of your Heavenly Father. It derived its sting and its heinousness from the fact that the love on which it trampled was so high, so beautiful, so perfect.

It is from this as starting-point that we begin to see our way into many things. Christianity, we have said, has a deeper note concerning sin than is found elsewhere. Its "conviction of sin" is peculiar to itself. Its saints, in every generation, have begun with this. There is no literature outside which carries such an accent of contrition. You may search the classics of Greece and Rome, of China and India, of Egypt and Babylon, and you will not find it. This sentiment of guilt-consciousness has doubtless often been carried to extremes, and has earned the criticism it has met with. There is no religion in grovelling.

But we have nothing here to do with exaggerations. Let us consider the sentiment in itself. When we ask why it is that Christianity carries this special note of the consciousness of sin we are immediately, for answer, thrown back upon some fundamental facts of the spiritual life. We stumble, for instance, on that foundation paradox that the sense of sin is the gauge of progress. That man has this sense is the sign that he is rising; the intensity of the sense denotes the height to which he may rise. In his pre-human, animal stage he did

the things he now calls sinful, and many more. But he did not know them by that name. It was when the ideal of something higher dawned on him, that the sense awoke of moral defect. It is what might happen in art. A village dauber by his early efforts gains the admiration of his circle, and has an excellent conceit of himself. Later he emerges from these surroundings to come in contact with the real thing, in the great masters. The confrontation with this perfection confounds him. He feels now an "artistic conviction of sin." He repents, and abhors himself in dust and ashes—a sign that he is on the way up. And as in art so in morals. It is precisely because the Christian ideal is the loftiest that has opened to the soul of man, that the contemplation of it has produced in him, age after age, this peculiar depth and intensity of self-abasement and reproach.

It is along this line also that we find answer to the objection of science against the Christian view of man as fallen and needing redemption. "There has been no fall," says our evolutionist; "man has been continually rising." "Well and good," we reply, "but let us consider a little." What do we mean by falling and rising? It may turn out that the two are necessary parts of the same process. We may here remember Pascal's definition, made so much of later by German philosophy, that the history of mankind is as the history of a single individual ever growing and ever learning. What is individual history? It is that at the beginning of the child who physically rises by degrees to the capacity of a fall—which will

come probably in its first journey across the floor—and morally of the same child, beginning with mere animal appetite and sensation, arriving at last at the moral sense, at that knowledge of right and wrong which it will sooner or later violate, one way or another. And if humanity as a whole made its progress after this fashion ; if in its advance, according to the evolution account, from subhuman to human, it has followed the analogy of the child, what quarrel arises between science and theology? Religion holds to both a rise and a fall ; the fall as part of the rise. It not only accepts the advance of the race. By its opening to the soul of the spiritual ideal, with the consequent immediate overpowering sense of inner loss and defect, it operates as the most puissant factor in furthering that advance.

But this, which is true of Christianity in its pure, spiritual conception, is assuredly not so of very much that has been offered as Christianity. And that by Protestant not less than by Catholic. Both, in their dogmatic treatment of sin, have practically denied the Gospel. They forgot its central doctrine of the Fatherhood. They took hold of infinity by the wrong end. They argued that because God was an Infinite Being, therefore man's sin against Him must be infinite, and open to infinite punishment. A sense in them even of humour, one would think, should have saved them from such a conclusion. God's perfection here comes in indeed for some strange handling. In its name Augustine falls into self-contradiction, and then

into what seems like blasphemy. In one breath he declares a good God cannot create a bad nature. In the next he is asserting that evil resides in the will, though as to where that originally came from he does not enlighten us. His further doctrine that the choice of good in one will and of evil in another rests on the bestowal or non-bestowal of grace, throws in the end, though he does not recognise it, the whole responsibility on God. The circle of theological atrocity is complete when, holding still to the dreary fiction of man's infinite sin, he and his successors make God to plan the eternal torment of His creatures before they are born. Calvin surely gives the process its finishing touch in his *decretum horribile*, which we had better give in his exact words : " Non pari conditione creantur omnes ; sed aliis vita aeterna, aliis damnatio aeterna, præordinatur." " All are not created in an equal condition, for some are preordained to eternal life and others to eternal damnation." But perhaps this is not the finishing touch, which may properly be apportioned to our Anglican Pearson, who, in his work on the Creed, tells us that " in the reprobate and damned souls the spot of sin remaineth in its perfect die ; the dominion of sin continueth in its absolute power ; the guilt of sin abideth in a perpetual obligation to eternal pains."

Altogether a very pretty gospel to offer to our poor humanity ! Assuredly the earlier Protestantism did not shine in its doctrine of God ! It is curious to notice how Rome, while holding speculatively to these implications concerning God, man

and sin, in its practical teaching mitigated these horrors in a fashion peculiarly its own. God the Implacable was to be bought off by a pecuniary arrangement with His agents the priests. It devised that system of pardons and "saleable exemptions" as Erasmus, himself a Catholic, termed them, by which, as he goes on to say, "Any notorious highwayman, any plundering soldier, or any bribe-taking judge, shall disburse some part of their august gains, and so think all their grossest impieties sufficiently accounted for; so many perjuries, lusts, drunken bouts, quarrels, bloodsheds, treacheries and all sorts of debaucheries, shall all be, as it were, struck a bargain for, and such a contract made as if they had paid off all arrears, and might now begin upon a new scale."

It is not thus we have learned Christ. Catholic and Protestant alike have here blundered fatally away from His doctrine of the Fatherhood. The infinitude of God, if He be Father, in its relation to transgression is surely first of all an infinitude of forgiveness, pity and love! If "unto seventy times seven" is the measure of man's patience with the wrongdoer, how shall the same work out of the Divine patience? To suppose that God's nature and feeling can change utterly to a man at the moment of his death is to suppose a child's falling to sleep were enough to turn its mother into its murderess. The wrath of God is always a Father's wrath; His punishments ever a means of grace. "*Zorn ist der Liebe zweite, heiss're Flamme,*" says beautifully a German poet. "Wrath is a second

love, its hotter flame." To believe other, to believe that sin and punishment are everlasting, is to believe in Zoroaster's Ormuzd and Ahriman, to believe the devil is as strong as God.

At this point some practical questions emerge. Sin, as we have seen, is at all points related to law, but is there in this sphere a law which is one and universal? Is the human heart in contact everywhere with the same moral code? At first sight the exact contrary would seem the case. We remember Pascal's *mot* about right on one side the Pyrenees being wrong on the other. Ethnology opens to us the widest divergence of moral theory and practice. There are tribes that hold cannibalism as part of their religion. What common ground between our view of sin and that of the Indian thug, or of the brave who exhibits the scalps he has taken as a certificate of character? But the comparison here is surely more apparent than real. It affects in no way the existence of that universal moral law which, in the Christian position, is the ground of its doctrine of sin. The human dissonances here are evidence not of a confusion of laws but of varying stages of development. To take a comparison from music. Could anything be more bewildering as a study in men's views of musical theory and practice than what we find actually to-day among different peoples? What community between the hideous uproar which delights the African savage and, say, the Eroica Symphony? And yet who will deny that music rests upon a harmonic law which is universal, rooted in the inmost nature of things, there before all the

worlds? That the same rule holds in morals is seen in this, that amongst the different peoples as mind, conscience and personality develop there is, keeping step with the process, an ever growing approximation of ethical idea.

But the question of questions to-day concerning sin is that of free-will. Are men really responsible for their actions, or are they simply links in a chain of irresistibly working forces? Is our notion of freedom an illusion, like that—to use Spinoza's illustration—of a stone flung into the air and imagining that it is flying? If the latter, the doctrine of sin in the Christian sense falls, of course, to the ground, for if man cannot help being what he is, or doing what he does, there is no guilt in his deed. Atonement would be out of place, and punishment a monstrous cruelty. It is curious to note how thought on this theme has swayed backwards and forwards throughout the Christian centuries. Theology has time and again denied freedom to the will. Irenæus, long before Augustine, has a strong doctrine of predestination, while Methodius speaks against it. At the Reformation, Luther wrote his "De Arbitrio Servo" against Erasmus, who contended for freedom. While Calvin and Luther, and Jonathan Edwards after them, argued against freewill in the interests of evangelical faith, we have in our own day the spectacle of religion fighting for free-will, as part of its very life, against the new predestination of scientific materialism.

The doctrine of Helvetius in the eighteenth century that "all men are what they must be; a fool

produces follies just as a wild shrub produces sour berries," has been reproduced under a new, professedly scientific form by physicists of the type of Buchner and Haeckel. Human action, according to them, is a product of predetermining causes as natural and as inevitable as the production of a crystal or a salt. Thought is a function of the brain; will is controlled by motive; by the necessary reaction of a character transmitted through heredity upon an external stimulus. Your deed to-day is one of a chain of effects traceable backwards in unbroken succession to the attractions and repulsions of the primordial atom.

It is an extraordinary feature of this teaching that it has been presented, not only as a truth of science, but as a gospel of liberation. And a wonderful relief truly for rascality that it should henceforth have not to blame but only to pity itself! "Gentlemen, I am a martyr of circumstance; I am the victim of heredity and unfavourable social conditions!" With this as his appeal to society the scapegrace imagines that the new doctrine will let him off much more easily than the old. What he does not perceive is the under side of the argument. Between the Christian word which says, "Thou hast sinned: repent," and this other which annihilates sin, there is really all the difference between hope and despair. The Biblical treatment may seem stern and severe. It tells the delinquent what it thinks of him. But its very condemnation is a promise. It holds in it the suggestion of remedy. "You are wrong, because you can do better. And in repentance and grace and the new resolve you

can find a way out." Compare this, in the matter of help and hope, with a doctrine which tells a man that his degradation, the vileness to which he has sunk, and for which he cannot help cursing himself, is just the thing he must be, one of the results for which the whole world-process from the beginning has been working!

But this teaching, as the best minds both in science and philosophy are now discovering, is not only wretched in result but wrong in its facts. The attempt to reduce everything to energy and matter, "*Kraft und Stoff*," as Buchner phrases it, has signally broken down. The thought kingdom in which man lives cannot be expressed in terms of matter. The region of brain cells, corpuscles, absorptions, exudations, respirations, is one thing; the region of emotion, of ecstasy, of contrition, of love, is quite another. The measurements of this are of no use in that. And the arguments that apply there have no application here. And this failure of correspondence between the matter-world and the mind-world applies equally to the will. You cannot argue about it in the terms of the material world. It is in a realm of law truly, but of a different law. For any real knowledge of the will we have to come right away from the foreign region of matter and force to the facts and sequences of the psychical realm. We have to study the will by what it does. We cannot explain it for the reason that it is a primary fact of consciousness and so beyond explanation. To "explain" a thing is to refer it to a primary, but you cannot explain a primary because there is nothing to

refer it to. That we will a thing cannot be demonstrated. It simply *is* so ; it is a thing which can only be proved by being experienced. As Dr. Johnson put it, "all theory is against free-will ; all experience is for it."

It is precisely on this experience of the will in action—just as on the experience of sight, as a primary sensation—that we have to found our whole knowledge of it. We have to begin with the fact as given in consciousness. What we find next is that the whole moral world starts from this fact as its centre, and groups its laws around it. Consider, in relation to free-will, the formation of man's moral vocabulary. The strongest words in the language ; those which bite most deeply into the heart of us ; which are found wherever man lives, acts and suffers, spring all from this fountain of man's moral freedom and responsibility. When we speak of a man's merit or demerit ; when we characterise him as villain or saint, we are naming the bottom facts of him. And no juggling with determinism, "scientific" or other, deprives these words of their awful strength, of their absolute finality. Destroy their meaning, and you destroy the meaning of life.

Solvitur ambulando. The will proves itself free by acting as free. No study of the outside machinery of brain or nerves, no calculations carried on in the region of matter and force, really touch the question. The will, in its movement up or down shows itself as belonging to that inner moral and spiritual realm in which man dwells, and where he finds his true being. And it is in the way that Christianity

meets man here ; in the way it meets his sense of loss and failure, of guilt and disgrace, with its august economy of sacrifice and redemption ; by its offers to him in his extremity of a Divine and gracious forgiveness, that it establishes itself as the eternal answer to his eternal problem.

VI

The Doctrine of Sacrifice

It has been made a subject of reproach to modern religious thinking that while using the terms of the great Christian doctrines it has emptied them of their meaning. It is, of course, quite possible to do that. But let it, at the same time, be remembered that no term in theology can keep an unbroken sameness of significance. The innovators here are not the "higher critics" or "levelling rationalists," but that "time-spirit," greatest of revolutionaries, whose eternal movement no bulwarks we may raise can resist. Nowhere is that movement and its results more conspicuously displayed than in this theme of sacrifice, which we propose now to consider. The word has changed its meaning because the thing has changed its meaning; changed, not in the sense of contradiction, but in that of advance and enlargement; changed, because new and higher elements have come into it, a deeper and more spiritual sense.

It is in a study of this sort that we see at work one of the most wonderful things in human history. That history, surveyed from the beginning, is one of the Divine ideas which, as it were, have incarnated

themselves in man, and which each generation has tried to express in its own fashion. In the dawn of civilisation these ideas take on the lowliest and most uncouth shapes, simply because man at that stage is lowly and uncouth. But as the ages roll, we see them assuming ever higher forms, whose majestic proportions compel us finally to recognise their exalted source. It has been one of the stupidest blunders of a superficial criticism to imagine that it has explained away Christianity by tracing back its central ideas to savage origins; to suppose that its doctrines of sin, retribution, sacrifice, atonement are done with when it has been shown that they have their roots in primitive institutions and barbarous beliefs. If they have, we ask, what then? Is not all this exactly what we should expect in a cosmic system which, in all its departments, works from below upwards? An oak is not an acorn because it comes from one. A religious system is to be judged not by its human beginnings, but by the thing it has grown to, and the kind of future which seems to open before it.

Religion from the first has been full of the doctrine of sacrifice. But how far we have travelled from its earlier conception would perhaps best be illustrated by contrasting a modern function of worship with one of two or three thousand years ago. Imagine the consternation of a London congregation if its presiding minister, say the Dean of Westminster or Dr. Clifford, instead of following the accustomed order of service, should suddenly hark back upon that Old Testament usage which we read of so complacently—should introduce a sheep or bullock to

the chancel, and there and then proceed to slaughter it! Nothing indeed is more difficult for us of to-day than to comprehend or even imagine that earlier state of mind. We can understand neither the men nor their God. What meeting-point is there between our view and that of Homer when, in the Iliad, he declares as a religious commonplace, "The gods, too, may be turned from their purpose; and men pray to them and avert their wrath by sacrifices and soothing entreaties, and by libations and the odour of fat, when they have sinned and transgressed!" Imagine the kind of spiritual world in which Agamemnon lived when, at Aulis, as pictured by Euripides, he is prepared to plunge his sword into his loved daughter, Iphigenia, because the prophet Calchas informs him this is the only way to propitiate the gods; to make them change the wind which keeps back the Greek fleet from its voyage to Ilium! Yet that was as far as men had got in that age in their notion of sacrifice.

But history shows us the steady march of ideas on this theme. The light as it dawns falls always first on the highest summits. In Israel, while the masses were pretty much in the condition depicted in Homer and the Greek tragedies, the great souls were opening to a truer conception. Their view of God had heightened, and with it their view of sacrifice. To the Hebrew prophets belongs the glory of lifting it out of the region of outward ceremony to that of character and the inward life. The magnificent outburst of Micah, which struck Huxley as containing religion's highest and final expression, "What doth the Lord require of thee,

but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? ” may, indeed, well be taken as the classic instance of prophetic inspiration.

The movement, however, did not stop there. The soul of humanity in its slow evolution had yet deeper, sublimer elements to disclose than that of mere personal uprightiness. It began to be realised that man's life, in its full expression, did not end in himself. It was mingled inextricably with that of the race. All that was in him would enter into humanity ; all that was in humanity would enter into him. More : in some high but dimly-discerned manner his life streamed out to the Infinite, and touched and was touched by the Unseen Powers. Those rudest sacrifices of which we have spoken meant that. The animal offerings, so revolting to us, were, after all, a religion, a true one as far as it went. They meant an intercourse of giving and receiving between man and God ; they meant that religion was for one thing a renunciation, a surrender of things that were valued. But now came a deeper note. Through experience, and through the soul's inward working, it began to be understood how vicarious suffering formed a condition of the higher life of the race. It began to be seen that somehow this element was rooted in the nature of things, and in the very heart of God. It was in Israel's later period that this view found expression in the Second Isaiah, in the sublime picture of the “ suffering servant ” of Jehovah as depicted in the fifty-third chapter. Still later we see how the idea has taken root in that prayer of the dying heroes in the fourth Book of Maccabees,

“Make my blood a sacrifice of purification, and accept my soul in place of theirs” (the people’s).

That which appears as root and germ in the Old Testament flowers into glorious perfection in the New. The Christian Gospel is above all things a Gospel of vicarious sacrifice, of a love that suffers, that gives itself for the race. Its centre is the death of Jesus. By a sure instinct theology has built itself round that fact. Yet the marvellous thing is that no one of the participators in that event suspected there was any theology in it! The Jewish priests, the Roman procurator, the soldiery, the spectators were all theologians of a sort. They were familiar with a doctrine and practice of sacrifice. But they saw no example of it here. What they saw was simply an execution, the carrying out of a legal sentence. Even the earliest Christian thought, as exhibited in the reputed sermon of Peter in the second of Acts, seemed not as yet to have grasped the significance of the Cross. The death is charged home on the Jews as a wickedness, but it is not the death so much as the resurrection which the speaker urges as reason for his hearers’ repentance and acceptance of Christ.

It was reserved for St. Paul, whose deep, intense personality and marvellous spiritual experience made him, alike by nature and grace, the predestined organ of this higher revelation—it was, we say, reserved for St. Paul to catch the full glory of the death on Calvary. It was by a flash of inspiration that the apostle, inheriting as he did the full Jewish tradition, familiar with all its ritual of expiatory sacrifice, saw now its relation to the Christ who

had died. Just as in His teaching Jesus had so divinely spiritualised the Jewish law, so now in His death He had, and yet more marvellously, spiritualised its ritual of sacrifice. The truth so rudely adumbrated by the priest and his victim was to gleam henceforth from the Cross in a new, diviner setting. "He gave Himself for us, the Just for the unjust." Here was the final, ultimate expression of the truth wrought into the very spiritual fabric of the universe: that humanity is redeemed by suffering love; that it climbs through sorrow, and chiefly by sorrow of the Highest for the lowest.

The difference between religion and theology is perhaps nowhere more strikingly exhibited than in the successive theories of the Cross that have followed each other through the Christian centuries. When good men to-day are accused of tampering with the doctrine of the Atonement we are inclined to ask, "Which doctrine?" The religion of the Cross is one thing; the doctrine of it quite another. If men are saved or lost by their correct or incorrect theology of it, then whole ages of the Church—ages which numbered its noblest martyrs and confessors—are surely past praying for. What has modern orthodoxy to say of that view which held its ground for nigh a thousand years, that Christ's death was a ransom paid to the devil, and that the resurrection was a kind of trick by which Satan was finally defrauded? Think of a man like Ambrose of Milan, one of the noblest saints and teachers of the fourth century, who brought the cruel Theodosius to his knees, who was the spiritual father of

the young Augustine, being able to pen a sentence like this : *Oportuit hanc fraudem Diabolo fieri, ut susciperet corpus Dominus Jesus*. " It was necessary in order that this fraud should be carried out upon the devil that the Lord Jesus should take a body " ! Can we imagine a theology of the Cross more grotesque or impossible ? And yet who amongst us has known more effectually than this fourth-century saint the religion of the Cross, as felt in the soul and realised in the life ?

A similar thing may be said of the *quid pro quo* theory of Anselm in his "*Cur Deus Homo*," a theory which, strangely enough, was in its main features accepted and taught by the Reformation leaders. This theology, which regards Christ as having, by His passion and death, paid in suffering the exact equivalent of human guilt, and thus satisfied the claims of God's justice and offended honour, is, as competent theologians have repeatedly pointed out, not so much a doctrine of grace as a negation of grace. For if in Christ's death man's debt has been fully paid he can claim his salvation not as a matter of grace from God, but as a matter of right. If salvation is a debtor and creditor account, when the adverse balance has been wiped out the creditor has no further *locus standi*. He has assuredly no right to talk of " grace " as extended to the debtor.

This mechanical view, which was constructed out of the Roman law and the feudal system, has no ground in Scripture, in experience, or in the nature of things. Augustine saw this ; saw that the Atonement was no mere payment, no mere appeasement.

Says he in the *De Trinitate*, " Would the Father have delivered up His Son for us if He had not been already appeased ? I see that the Father loved us before the Son died for us."

In sum : Sacrifice is an integral law of the spiritual life. Its root is in the heart of God ; its expression is the religious history of man. Beginning in lowliest forms it reaches its supreme glory in the Cross. The interpretations of the Cross are at best only imperfect endeavours after a Divine mystery. When in our personal or public life we turn aside from the law of sacrifice we deny the Cross and desert God. In drinking the bitter sweet of this cup the soul finds its uttermost self. Along this line is achieved all inner progress. All the heroisms draw here their inspiration. From this source flows the power that redeems the world.

VII

On Being Saved

It is a saying of Renan that "at the outset a new religion is often but a new kind of literature." He applies the remark to Mohammedanism and the Koran, but it is suggestive also of things nearer home. The state of religion, for instance, in ourselves and the society to which we belong, has hardly a surer test than the literary one. The secret of our spiritual condition is revealed in the significance we attach to words. The faith of a people or a time, whether a growing, a stagnant, or a decadent faith, shows in the changes that have come in its word-symbols. The change will, usually, not be in the words themselves. The vocables are there, permanent residents in the language, spelled and pronounced with smallest variation from one generation to another. The difference lies in the new meanings that have crept into them, in the old meanings that have dropped out, in the effect they produce upon us as compared with their effect upon our fathers.

The remark applies to the whole of our religious phraseology, but to none of it with greater force than to that with which we propose

here specially to deal. "Salvation," "being saved," and the allied words and phrases form to-day, as they have formed in all the Christian ages, an integral and vital part in our Church vocabulary. The all-important question is, What do we now mean by them? That we mean something is evident. The youngest and perhaps the most vigorous of our Christian organisations, the "Salvation Army," has found its title in them. Yes, we mean something, but *what* we mean is the question. Are we, for instance, in the mental position, on this matter, which dictated the phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the Church is no salvation)? Are we with Hooker in his saying that "Scripture teacheth all supernatural revealed truth, without the knowledge whereof *salvation cannot be attained*"? Or are we to-day anywhere near the frame of mind which almost in our own generation inspired the cry of Newman, in his agony at Littlemore: "The simple question is, Can I be saved in the English Church? Am I in safety were I to die to-night?"

To ask our question is to answer it. No; we are not in the mental attitude which inspired these utterances. The standpoint has shifted. The new generation is beginning to inquire, indeed, with a certain surprise why such questions should ever have been mooted. "What," it asks, "has man, here solidly fixed on this planet, to be saved from? Or from whom? Has he an enemy then? Or is not this universe on the whole a beneficent universe, well-intentioned towards him? Have we not in all this phraseology a misconception of

the meaning of life? Are we then a shipwrecked crew, whose one business is to leave a doomed vessel and to scramble by some means to shore; or is it not rather that we are no shipwrecked crew, but comfortably ashore, planted, indeed, in a magnificent inheritance, with invitation to cultivate it, to open its treasures and enjoy them? Is not this quest of 'salvation' an obsession of the past, from which it is time we were relieved?"

There is a certain basis for these queries. They serve, indeed, to bring home to us the fact that some of the elements which entered into the idea of salvation in earlier ages have lost their force in ours. Conceptions that still hold their ground in official theology are (and it is time we recognised the fact) simply survivals of an earlier, savage state. Man is not only an active, working force. He is also a museum. He carries in him the relics of his immeasurable past. And one of the most formidable of these remainders is Fear. In the far-off ages from which we have come it was a terrible thing to be a man. Not only had he, with his scanty equipment, to fight against savage beasts and the rage of the elements; he had by day and night the far more awesome conflict with the unknown. This unknown was not only far mightier than he; it seemed to him also to be malignant. The darkened sky, the gleam of lightning, the thunder's roar, the earthquake's upheaval, sickness, pain, death, what were these if not the anger of the Powers behind? The natural causes were all undiscovered, and it is a law of the primitive mind that where natural causes are unknown events are attributed to the

agency of wills like its own. Hence there grew in the early world an enormous Fear, which ruled its actions, created much of its religion, and which still in strange, fantastic ways asserts its sway over us. Against our clearest reason and firmest persuasion we are still haunted by the idea that the universe is malignant. In an empty house at midnight it is difficult to rid ourselves of the feeling that the darkness conceals a foe, that the creak of a door is a stealthy footstep, that from the gloom some ghastly shape may emerge. The past, which still holds its ground in the back chambers of the brain, would persuade us that 'tis a demon-haunted world, where not God but the devil rules.

Clearly we do need to be saved, to be saved from fear. We are not yet persuaded that this is a cheerful, homely, well-meaning universe, whose powers, if strict in their working, are nevertheless beneficent and not diabolic. Not yet are we delivered from the mental condition which Plutarch—one, surely, of the sanest, as well as devoutest, minds of antiquity—has pictured for us in his "*De Superstitione*": "In the very sleep of her victims, as though they were in the realms of the impious, superstition raises horrible spectres and monstrous phantoms, and whirls the miserable soul about, and persecutes it." At death, he continues, superstition makes "deep gates of hell to yawn, and headlong streams of at once fire and gloom are opened, and darkness with its many phantoms encompasses . . . and chasms and dens full of innumerable miseries." We have not yet emerged from that region. Salvation is to

multitudes of us a theological device against theological phantoms. We are not yet convinced that God is Love. Newman, we see, had such an opinion of Him as to believe Him capable of damning him to eternal torments on the score of the difference between Anglo-Catholicism and Roman Catholicism. At a time when, in our criminal system, the infliction of pain for pain's sake is rejected as barbarous; when our entire action in this department is directed to reformation and prevention, we still go on attributing to Deity the most fiendish and senseless of penal codes. We do this, we say, officially. Practically most of us have probably reached the position of that fine old Christian layman Sir Thomas Browne: "That most terrible term (hell) hath never detained me from sin, nor do I owe any good action to the name thereof. I fear God, yet am not afraid of Him. His mercies make me ashamed of my sins before His judgments afraid thereof." We have a certain sympathy with the woman whom Diderot speaks of in "*Sur les Femmes*," who promenaded the streets of Alexandria, a torch in one hand and a ewer of water in the other, and who cried, "I would burn heaven with this torch, and extinguish hell with this water, in order that man might love God for Himself alone."

Plainly our salvation, as theologically conceived, has survivals in it which we were well rid of; that are not Divine, no, nor human, but only sub-human. Nevertheless, salvation is a living word, expressive of a most real and living thing. There is no man of us but needs it, nor that will not fail

without it. As the outside life—the battle with the elements, with circumstance, with the dead weight of things—demands our best effort, so here, in the inward life, victory comes only through struggle and pain, the putting forth of our utmost will, the reinforcement of other powers than our own. Augustine found two things in the universe, God and his own soul. Yes, God and the soul, and the problem with us, as with him, is to adjust their relations. To begin with, no man is at peace till he has found God, and is on right terms with Him. Through all the languages and all the religions of men we see this emerging as their chief and final business. Read Bunyan's "Grace Abounding" and Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," and you shall find their theme the same. Their language, their general cosmic outlook, how poles asunder different! Yet the deep essence of their trouble is, we say, the same. When the Tinker at the worst of his distress wishes himself a dog or a worm, he is with Teufelsdröckh when the "Everlasting No" had said: "Behold thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's)." And the joy of the two pilgrims when they get the "Spiritual New Birth or Baphometric Fire-baptism," and can say "I am not thine but free, and for ever hate thee," is the same joy. But New Birth and Fire-baptism, for a Bunyan or a Teufelsdröckh, for you and me, means the conscious union of our poor self with a greater and better self, the finding of that Highest whose Witness has been ever in us, and to whom now, as our refuge and strength, we joyfully give ourselves over. Christianity, as lived, means that

first and last. The perfection of Jesus was the perfection of His union with God, and what He offers us is that same Divine secret. We have entered into it when we can say in our humble measure, with Him in His highest measure, "I and my Father are one."

God and the soul. Salvation, working upward to the first, works downward next upon the second. We have to be saved from ourselves, and it is a tough business. Says Amiel, "The animal in man becomes human only late in the day, and then only in the beautiful souls." The Gospel is, in this matter, more optimistic than the Geneva philosopher. It proposes to make beautiful souls out of the most unpromising materials. Its challenge is of the boldest, yet quite natural. It says in effect that the illimitable physical forces which, as we discover their secret, are transforming our world for us, are matched by illimitable spiritual forces, which in proportion as we learn and obey their laws will work grander transformations in the kingdom of the heart. And it is too late in the day to contest this fact. The experiment has been made a thousand times over, and the results are for anyone who chooses to study them. They exhibit Christianity not as a dogmatic system, but as a spiritual force that renovates and cleanses the soul. Wesley's Kingswood colliers showed its operation on the roughest classes. For its work on the cultured take the beautiful words of Erasmus on Dean Colet: "He was a man of genuine piety. He was not born with it. He was naturally hot, impetuous, and resentful, indolent, fond of pleasure, disposed

to make a joke of everything. He told me that he had fought against his faults with study, fasting and prayer, and thus his whole soul was, in fact, unpolluted with the world's defilements. . . . I never knew a man with a sunnier nature." That is salvation.

There remain two observations. First, the real saving, as thus appears, is a saving into character ; from a lower to a higher spiritual state of ourselves. But what room does this leave for the ceremonies, the priestly absolutions, the sacramental efficacies, the orthodoxies by which ecclesiasticism proposes to deliver us ? Deliver us from what ? Is there not at the bottom of this whole business the idea that our great need is to be saved from God, an idea that to us at least is the worst of all blasphemies ? If ceremony can wash away sin—turn a man from thieving to honesty—well and good. If not, what use is it ? To observe it as a means of placating God is to resort to the superstition, begotten of that old-world fear of which we have spoken, which places Him, whose name is Love, on a level with Thor and Woden—with savage deities whose wrath must be appeased by magic rites.

And, finally, salvation, considered as the finding of God and the finding of character, contains in it the idea of a Church, as part of its method. Do we not, indeed, find here the true sense of that otherwise hard saying, " Outside the Church (that is, outside a brotherly fellowship) is no salvation." For we cannot complete our character without our brother's aid. All the virtues of it suppose him. We cannot love nor serve nor sacrifice ; we cannot

cultivate humility nor patience nor self-abnegation, except as members of a society. We cannot find our own soul except in the soul of our brother. There is no true joy that is not a sharing. Being saved, then, is a fellowship with God which unites us by love and service with every soul that He has made.

VIII

Theology's Hidden Factors

WE have had in these pages occasion to speak more than once of the distinction between religion and theology. Religion is a life ; theology is the attempt to explain that life. When we have reached the secret of life in even its humblest forms ;—when we can really explain an amœba or a rat—it will, perhaps, be time enough for us to talk of explaining life at its highest. Yet from the beginning the attempt has been made, and it will continue to be made. Theology is an old-established business. And so long as it takes itself at its true value ; so long as it is content to recognise itself as provisional, as immeasurably behind its subject, we may not only tolerate, but welcome it. It is only when it waxes fat and insolent, when it puts on airs and talks as though it knows when it does not, that it becomes an offence to thinking men.

But taking theology in the sense we have indicated, as the attempt, quite legitimate in itself, to explain the world of spirit by the light which each age offers, it is deeply interesting to note the factors which go to its formation. We shall never

understand its dogmas ; never estimate properly their positive and their relative value, until we have some idea of the process of their evolution, and of the material that has been built into them. What it is so important to note, and what we want here to try and point out, is that so much of this material is, to the general eye, quite unrecognisable as theology, at the furthest remove apparently from the subject. Your theology is a curious compound. It is well, as you swallow it, to know something of its ingredients, of who and what helped to knead them together.

Note first the forces employed in the theological movement. As an expression of life theology is bound to move, to grow, and to change its form. And that because it is a fundamental law of the life it deals with to do these things ; that is, to move, to grow and to change its form. But the process is a slow one. It is a matter of common remark that nowhere so much as in theology is the progress of ideas so difficult and so halting. What is not so clearly seen is the set of causes that produce this retardation. A study of them should restrain our impatience, both with men and systems. For it shows us how natural they are ; how inevitable that they should work as they do.

First among the retarding causes is the comparative permanence of fixed ideas, especially when, as in this case, they receive the immense reinforcement of the soul's feeling. A theological idea, crude, it may be, and quite inadequate in itself, becomes another thing when allied with religious emotion. It is not perceived by those under the

influence that these two things, the idea and the feeling, are not really one. The fact that the two have, for years, centuries perhaps, been allied, has given them an appearance of identity which it is supremely difficult to displace. And thus while the old inferior idea has for a time behind it the incomparable force of religion's inner feeling, the new, higher one has often the fate to lie bare and seemingly unaccompanied. It will only reach its hour when the soul by its growth recognises it finally as the wider, deeper channel along which the tide of its faith and love may flow.

What must also not be forgotten here is that the old, the established in theology, will by that very fact have gathered all the vested interests around it, which will naturally fight for its life as their own. The new faith, which begins by opposing an earlier order, may usually reckon on crucifixion. Jesus, greatest of revolutionaries, expected to be put to death by the vested interests, and was not deceived. Orthodoxy, that is to say, the line of life and thinking that has established itself, is sure of its army of defenders. There is money in it, and the people who love money will accordingly be there. On this side, too, are the honours and dignities. Annas and Caiaphas are well housed, and belong to the best Jerusalem society. The Galilean has not where to lay His head. Along this well-worn track, too, the mental going is so easy. It is the line of least resistance, and upon it accordingly will be found that numberless host who wish to be spared the trouble of thinking. Truly, when one surveys these accumulated forces of resistance

the wonder is that theology has ever moved at all.

“And yet it moves.” The forces we have mentioned are strong, but what they contend against is stronger. There is one thing which no combination can resist, and that is the law of life. It is just this law lying directly underneath theology, which compels its movement. Consider, for instance, the working on any system of the mere lapse of time. No vested interests, no accumulated force of feeling can prevent the years from rolling. But observe what that means. As illustrative of its effect upon thought, one might choose an historical period almost at random out of any of the Christian centuries. Suppose, for instance, we take the middle of the second century, and compare it with the first, the apostolic age. Any one conversant with the literature of the two periods knows the enormous difference of the theologic outlook, a difference created, one may say, by the years. Though they bore the same name, what a gulf separated the second century Christians from those who were contemporaries of Jesus! We in this age, with our neatly bound Bible, our creeds, our established church order, our printing press which multiplies our religious documents without limit, have difficulty in realising the mental state, the theologic condition, shall we say, of the disciples of that second period—who had no first-hand witnesses left of their faith, and no literature scarcely to take their place. What they have in this kind are a few manuscript copies circulating here and there of the

“Recollections” quoted from by Justin Martyr, and which in all probability were our synoptic gospels; the Apostolic Epistles; some letters of Christian bishops, such as the Epistles of Clement and Ignatius; a number of imaginative and visionary works, such as “The Shepherd” of Hermas; and further—most significant of all—the fantastic speculations, every year growing wilder, of the Gnostic thinkers. What a position for theology, yet how inevitable! We see here at work its unnoted factors. Time has carried away the apostolic witnesses; the lack of education, of printing, and all our modern arts, has prevented the diffusion of an adequate literature. Left to tradition, to the often treacherous memories, which during three generations have been almost the sole conservators of the Gospel facts, what wonder that the theology of that age, orthodox and unorthodox, as we have it reflected later in the pages of Irenæus and Tertullian, assumes a character so bewildering?

This time-illustration might have been taken from any other age, only to show similar results. There has never been any standing still, no, not in those Middle Ages, which are sometimes ignorantly pointed to as a period of theologic immobility. Each generation, while holding to the same prescribed form of words, has given them its own special significance. Each, we perceive, under the influence of the time spirit, has had a changed *Weltanschauung*, or general world-view. In this process of alteration it is interesting to note how the most influential factors are often apparently at the farthest remove from the subject. One might

hazard the paradox that the real theologians are those who have nothing to do with theology. Darwin would scarcely be named to-day as an ecclesiastical student, yet the thinking of every ecclesiastic of our generation is conditioned by Darwin. Every theological work, whether for or against, pivots round his central idea. And as with the past so with the future. The theological movement of the next decade will be determined, we venture to say, not by the theologians. It will not be by what the divines can dig out of their time-worn manuscripts, but by what the new zoology of the Neo-Lamarckians ; by what De Vries, Hamann, Driesch and Wundt have to offer against a materialistic "natural selection" as the origin of things, and in favour of a purposed movement discoverable in the world, implying intelligence and personality behind it ; it will be by further researches into the mysteries of cellular and atomic formation, revealing the spiritual basis of matter, that the great reaction is coming from the doubts of the last generation to a new faith in God.

Another of the hidden factors in theology is to be found in the earlier religions of the peoples who, by one means and another, have been won over to the Christian faith. The kind of ground your seed falls on, not less than the seed itself, will determine the quality of the crop. Zealous Protestants have, for instance, denounced the saint worship and practical polytheism of Catholic countries as a kind of diabolical perversion of primitive Christianity. The modern historian takes a different view. The "polytheism" is simply the revival

under other forms of the earlier paganism which Christianity nominally supplanted. The worship of the "Mother of God" is a baptized version of the old Astarte cult; and village festivals in Italy, with priest and mass book assisting, are traced back to pagan rites in honour of local divinities—assets that the Church took over and continued to run as part of its business, under another name.

Temperament also, the temperament of races and of leading individualities, must be noted as one of the vastest of the unseen influences that have shaped and coloured theology. Some constitutions exude more bile than others, and too many theologians have been bilious to begin with. That has been the real secret of their view of God and man. They had been in another universe could you have improved their liver. Other leading thinkers, speaking out of a good digestion and a happy career, have never been able to see the actual evil of the world; and their theology, occupied mainly with the sunshine, is, in consequence, scarcely reliable as to life's under side. Like Madame Récamier, as described by Sainte-Beuve, who "*ne croyait pas au mal*," they do not believe in evil. But the evil for all that is there.

Thus much of temperament. One could multiply indefinitely these under-working forces that play upon the theological product. Geography, for instance. The mere fact of a man transporting himself from one degree of longitude to another has had more than once the most critical and far-reaching influence. Pusey, early in his career, spent some time in Germany, and caught there the

critical spirit to such a degree as to lead some of the old school of Anglican divines to cry out against his rationalising tendencies. One wonders what would have been the later history of Anglicanism had our young theologian remained some years longer in Rhineland, instead of coming back as he did to Oxford ! The question is similar to that asked by Stanley as to what would have been the course of Church thinking had Newman known German !

Ours is a mere sketch of a vast subject, but enough, one hopes, has been said to show how impossible it is to keep theology at a standstill ; to show still further that there is no separate department for it in the scheme of human knowledge. All truth is one, because the universe is one. Every fact and every happening plays into every other fact and happening. The movement is inevitable. But what faith discerns is that the march is always in one direction. As the horizon broadens it shows only more clearly the outlines of our spiritual inheritance. Every truth, from whatsoever quarter it opens upon us, fits into its place as part of the continuous, ever-growing and evermore luminous revelation of God.

IX

The Quality of Belief

AMID the wrangles of to-day about beliefs, it is worth while asking a preliminary question about belief. Not that this is by any means an undiscussed subject. There is, perhaps, no topic of religion that has been more exhaustively handled. Were we to mention even the names of the books in which theology, to say nothing of philosophy, has expounded the theme—tomes on the nature of faith, on justifying faith, on prevenient grace as related to faith, on the factors in belief, on belief and the creeds, on “the will to believe,” on faith and authority, and the like—we should more than fill this volume. A vast deal of the argument is of a dry-as-dust character, and too much of it is morbid. What trouble has there been in pious, unpractised minds, as to whether their faith was of the right, saving brand ; what probing, and sifting, and analysing of poor distracted souls ! Their dog all along has been a better philosopher. There has never been a sounder faith than that which he has in his master, and yet these disquieting questions concerning it have never for one moment troubled his doghood. Our introspection

is too often like that of a healthy man who, on a spring morning, should shut himself up to examine his eyes instead of turning them joyfully on all the beauty outside.

Nevertheless, on this so over-trodden theme, there are some considerations—other than those usually treated in the tomes we have mentioned—which, in the present position of matters spiritual among us, seem very worthy to be dealt with. We need, for our time, to have it made quite clear to us what belief is and what it is not ; to note the different forms of it and their value ; and, not least, the mistakes concerning it which previous ages have bequeathed to us as a *damnosa haereditas*.

Let us, first of all, rid ourselves of the notion that there is any diminution of belief in the world. There is as much now as ever there was. Every man is full of belief. When we talk of believers and unbelievers we are using the terms only by way of accommodation. The atheist is as full of faith as the most devout Catholic. For all his denials are simply affirmations read backwards. When he denies that this thing is as it appears to you, it is only another way of saying that he believes it is as it appears to him. He can, in fact, no more help believing than he can help breathing. The capacity is in him, just as his heart and lungs are in him, and is as constantly being used. The difference between men is not here at all. We are all alike full up with beliefs ; the point is not here, but in the quality of our beliefs ; in other words, in what we believe and how we believe it.

Let us, in the next place, be sure of another

thing, that belief has a quality of its own, not hard to be discerned, and which marks it off from all counterfeits and imitations. History is full of these last, but we can always detect them. And we can see the genuine belief under the imitation. When Charlemagne, after one of his battles, offered the defeated Saxons the option of conversion to Christianity or of being put to the sword, the consent of his captives to the former alternative was certainly, in its way, an act of faith, but it was not faith in Christianity. It was the assured belief—the full assent and consent of their minds to the proposition—that unless they there and then accepted baptism their throats would incontinently be cut. And there are illustrations much nearer home than Charlemagne and the Saxons. In his essay on “Compromise,” Mr. Morley asks: “Are we to suppose that it is firm persuasion of the greater scripturalness of Episcopacy that turns the second generation of dissenting manufacturers in our busy Lancashire into Churchmen?” As everyone knows, and not least the converts themselves, the Anglican creed which they now recite represents in no way the actual belief upon which they have acted. The working conviction here is that of the dominance and power of the Establishment, and of the social advantages which a connection with it secures.

Belief, as an active exercise of the mind, is involuntary. You can no more will to believe than you can will to be hot or cold. Just as these sensations are registers within of a fact outside, namely, of the temperature, so belief is the soul’s register of an outside fact, namely, of the evidence

presented to it. You may, it is true, act on the temperature by various means, and so in a sense will your heat and cold. But the actual sensation is always a register of what is there. In like manner you can manufacture evidence; or pay attention solely to one class of evidence; and so in a way seem to will your belief. But what you cannot do is to alter the way in which the evidence presented works belief on the mind. And here comes in Locke's famous proposition, where, discussing the love of truth in men, he says: "And I think there is this one unerring mark of it, namely, the not entertaining any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built upon will warrant." Theologians of a certain school have exclaimed loudly at this thesis, but it will hold water. And that we can best see when we note the attacks upon it.

For instance, it is urged that such a rule would do away with that belief upon authority on which the vast majority of the race—children and the mass of the uneducated—have to depend as their working faith. Does it not, argues Newman, "cut off from the possibility and the privilege of faith all but the educated few, all but the learned, the clear-headed, the men of practised intellects and balanced minds?" The reply is simple. The objection is wide of the mark. Locke is here in no wise impugning the legitimate exercise of authority as a ground of belief. We all begin this way. As children, and in our whole career as learners, we have very largely to take things on trust. But what Newman and others of his school have forgotten is that the

exercise of this trust, of our yield to authority, is an illustration of this very Lockian law of belief on evidence which is attacked. For why do we, children and adults, believe upon authority? Precisely because the evidence for the validity of the authority seems to us sufficient. Young people know that their elders and teachers know more than they do, and go upon that. In our turn, when we accept the conclusions of Newton's "Principia" without studying it, we do so on the evidence of his capacity as a mathematician and the agreement with him of other competent minds.

Thus—and here is the whole point to be noted—the belief through authority is still and entirely a belief upon evidence. The authority is itself the evidence. If the authority is a strong, an indubitable one, our belief will correspond. If the authority is doubtful our mental condition will be one of doubt. And it cannot be otherwise, for the mind in this works automatically, by its own law. And it is precisely here that the so-called Church authority advanced by Catholics as the ground of belief for their dogmas so hopelessly breaks down. We accept authorities, as we have said, when we have evidence that they know things better than we do. When we find they do not the situation is changed. An almost perfect illustration of what we mean is furnished, curiously enough, by one of the greatest of the Church authorities—to wit, St. Augustine. Readers of him will remember how his first doubts of the Manichæan system, to which, in his youth, he had attached himself, arose from his contact with Faustus, its most noted leader and advocate.

When Augustine, who began with the deepest reverence for him, found that the great man, in subjects such as mathematics, with which he himself was familiar, was really only a pretender to knowledge, he began to distrust his competency to decide for him the greater matters of religion. That is precisely where the educated mind of to-day is in respect of the Councils and Popes, and of the entire ecclesiastical machinery which undertakes to decide for us what we are to believe. We have discovered their incompetency as authorities. Their decisions represent a mental condition that in a hundred ways has been outgrown. "What is always, everywhere, and by all believed," to quote the famous Catholic formula, is really in itself no adequate evidence. A single Copernicus may overturn in astronomy what for ages has been "everywhere and by all believed." Professor Curie with his radium was a better witness on the atom than all the chemists of all the ages. The modern mind, with its science of history, with its knowledge of the uniformity of law, with its insight into the growth of tradition, can tell us more about the validity of dogma than the whole catena of the fathers.

Does it follow, then, because we find the earlier Christian ages wrong about so many things, that the religion they teach is no longer authoritative for us? Because their belief is not in all respects ours, have we no belief? Far otherwise. At this point comes before us a different sort of evidence. Inside the truth revealed by scientific research there lies another truth, even more vital, that, namely, which opens to character and service.

There is a persuasion which results from living in a certain way, from following certain disciplines and ideals. This is the truth of the heart, which is always greater than the truth of the intellect. The conviction that two and two make four is reached one way ; the conviction that the pure in heart see God in quite another. And it is when we search the Christian centuries under the guidance of this principle that we find a reality independent of and infinitely higher than all the dogmatic, doctrinal forms in which it is wrapped. We see that the opinions of those times were one thing—time vestures suited to certain mental conditions. But the love, the sacrifice, the devotion that were there ; the holy lives, the martyr deaths, are in a different category. These are the treasure in the earthen vessel. These hold for us a truth immortal and Divine, which it is for us in our turn to seek adequately to body forth.

The tree is known by its fruits. A conviction which makes a man better than he was before ; which holds him back from sin, which stirs his love and sets him on the road upward, has the truth inside it, however rude his attempts at explanation. It is deeper, in fact, than our best explanation. A Russian correspondent of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, writing of the Nonconforming sects in his country, said their villages had an air of brightness and well-being absent from those of the Orthodox Russians ; “ the evangelical sectarian is one who does not drink or smoke ; is economical, thrifty, and more industrious than the slaves of the Synod.” We might dispute half the opinions of these people ;

they are probably crude enough. What lies outside dispute is that proof from life which shows the presence here under lowliest forms, of a something so infinitely higher than our logic, whose working is bit by bit redeeming the world.

It is the supreme business of the Church to-day to exhibit this logic of the heart. For this is the evidence which not only compels belief, but belief of the highest kind. So different is it from the mere persuasion of the intellect. It is not on the same level at all with your conviction about arithmetic or chemistry. You may have those and be a brute and a sensualist. You cannot have these others without feeling an upward tug. With this kind of truth growing ever upon us we can afford the strictest revisions in the religion of the intellect. Let criticism exact here what it will. Whatever changes it may effect in our thought it can serve only to deepen in us the sense of that Kingdom whose glories are discerned by faith, and whose products are righteousness, peace and joy.

X

Of Religious Transition

THE picture which Lucian, in the *Hermotimus*, draws of the bewildered traveller, besieged in turn by a dozen different philosophic and religious sects, each pointing to a different road as the one and only way to truth and peace, was surely never more vividly or pathetically realised than in our day. Not the least striking feature of the confusion is that it occurs amongst the first-class minds. Consider what has happened in this generation amongst our best Englishmen! The two Newmans, starting from the same Evangelical household, dowered each with rare mental gifts and deep religious feeling, passing through the same discipline of school and college, emerge finally, the one as a Roman Cardinal, the other as a non-Christian theist. Leslie Stephen, beginning in his home with the very finest brand of Evangelical Anglicanism, ends in a militant Agnosticism. Frederic Harrison, brought up amidst devout High Church influences, becomes the apostle of Positivism. Mr. Allanson Picton, in his ancestry and his earlier years representing the most cultured form of Nonconformity, anchors himself

finally in the system of Spinoza. The wonder of these transitions is that the several travellers seem all equally satisfied with the bourne they reach. Cardinal Newman declares that after his conversion to Rome, he never had a doubt. Mr. Harrison, in his own recent "Apologia," expresses himself in almost exactly the same terms. Mr. Picton speaks with no less emphasis of the spiritual peace he has found in Pantheism. And the others we have mentioned are equally sure that the position they have arrived at offers the best inward satisfaction that this life affords.

Is there, then, no ultimate truth which humanity will reach, in which all minds and hearts will finally agree? We should be sorry to think so. The lesson for the moment here is that the curve is too large for our measurement. The ultimate all-uniting synthesis is vaster than we can at present see. To reach it there seems necessary the experience by our race of every possible mental attitude, an experience, not only of minds, but of lives. Our various "noes" and "yeas" are all to be put to the test, that we may learn exactly what they do and do not yield. Let us be sure, however, that the final answer will not be a "no," rather a "yea," which will comprehend all that the "noes" have to teach us, and be so much the more satisfying by that very comprehension.

Let us, however, now observe some things connected with these transitions. One does not wonder, considering the apparent confusions to which they lead, that religious minds dread them, and the intellectual operations which bring them

about. Newman fled to Rome as a refuge from what he calls "the wild living intellect of man." Isaac Taylor deprecates too much mind in divinity. "Theology," says he, "offers no field to men fond of intellectual enterprise." Men are afraid of what the "destructive force" of reason will bring upon religion and the Church. A well-known divine recently expressed his thankfulness, in view of what was coming, that his ministry was behind rather than before him. Some find no remedy except in a speedy Apocalypse and dissolution of things. They are here of Luther's mind; "The world is an odd fellow; may God soon make an end of it." The same shiver, in thought of the future, comes over Sir Thomas Browne in the *Religio Medici*. He thinks a sensible man "is not likely to envy those that shall live in the next age, much less three or four hundred years hence, when no man can comfortably imagine what face this world will carry."

These surely are strange notions. They illustrate what one is so continually meeting with—the rooted, unreasoning scepticism of believers. What sort of a faith is it to imagine that God, who is held to have wrought so wonderfully in the past, will have no hold on the future? What kind of belief is this which dreads the operation of that mind within us which is our best evidence of an Eternal Mind? As if intellect were outside of law; instead of being, as anyone may see who will study its history, the finest illustration and expression of Divine law? Its movement from age to age is as steady, as irresistible as the growth

of a tree, as the swing of a planet in its orbit. Religious transition is in fact simply a feature of the mind's growth, and must always go on because the mind is always growing. Our world-view at sixteen, how entirely different is it from that we held at six? And the one at thirty-six will be just as different from the one at sixteen.

The human race, as a whole, follows in this respect the history of the individual. The most conservative of thinkers cannot get away from that fact. Newman, in his essay on Development, makes full use of it, though he limits it in his own way. His personal experience had shown him the irresistible forces that make for movement. "How," says he in the "Apologia," "was I to be sure that I should always think as I thought now?" And again, "It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years and I find my mind in a new place. How? The whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it." He ever realised that, as he elsewhere puts it, he "was on a journey." He imagined he had reached the end in Catholicism. But where old men end young men begin. The young Catholics of to-day find they too are "on a journey," the end of which they see not. Schiller's line about Goethe, "Much that still interests me has already had its epoch with him," is so true of mind life everywhere. We have our epochs. To-day religion and life appear to us under a certain aspect. Then comes a turn in the road, a new province of knowledge, or the sheer, unconscious gestation of the soul, and that aspect has disappeared, never, by any process, to be recalled.

What is the law in individual lives has been, on the greater scale, the law of religious history. Of this the story of Christianity from beginning to end has been one long illustration. Its thought-movement, "unhasting, unresting," has never for a moment ceased. It has been unhasting. Here, as elsewhere, *Natura non facit saltus*. The transition from Judaism to Christianity was by no means the sudden affair that people are apt to imagine. The modern student sees the one fading into the other in the most gradual way. It is step by step. The Master was Himself a Jew; His disciples thought of themselves as Jews. The first churches, not only in but outside Palestine, had Jews as their nucleus. Supposing it had been otherwise; supposing the missionary churches had been made up entirely of pagans, of people whose traditions were simply of Jove and the Olympian gods and goddesses, how different, how impossible the thing would have been! It is to the Judaism in Christianity that we owe our possession of the Old Testament, much of our moral code, a large part of the Church's organisation.

But the movement, though step by step, has never ceased from then till now. The Romanist "*Semper eadem*" is the oddest of fancies. The notion of an infallibility, of a final utterance on doctrine, whether by the Fathers, or by Councils, or by Popes, is for people who do not read history. As to the Fathers, let any one read the large-minded Greeks among them—Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa—and contrast their Universalism with the Eschatology of a Tertullian

or an Augustine ! They are as the poles asunder. Their “unanimity” is beautifully illustrated by the proceedings at Sardica, where the Eusebians declare the Athanasians to be “an unscrupulous set of liars,” and accuse Athanasius of blasphemy. What absolute truth, too, was in Councils may be gathered from that of Carthage, which pronounced an anathema on “those who say that man was created mortal, and would have died even though he had not fallen.” And what becomes of Papal infallibility when we read of Pope Honorius teaching “*ex cathedrâ*” the Monothelite doctrine condemned afterwards as a heresy by an Œcumenical Council ; or of Pope Vigilius, who, in Justinian’s reign, made four or five “*ex cathedrâ*” assertions and afterwards the flattest contradictions of them, on the doctrine of the two natures ?

When we advance from this period to that of the Middle Ages the spectacle is the same. People are apt to think of the mediæval time—the age of faith—when Rome had undisputed supremacy over Christendom, as one of doctrinal unanimity and immobility. There could not be a greater mistake. Look beneath the surface and you find a tumult of onward hurrying thoughts. The movement, it must be admitted, was not always in one direction. Christian doctrine became more materialised. Transubstantiation grew into a dogma. Jesus, as is shown very clearly in twelfth century pictures, had ceased to be gentle, and had become terrible. Yet what immense upheavals, what revolutions in thinking there were in those days ! Think of the Franciscan leaders, Joachim di Flor and

John of Parma, with their "Eternal Gospel," according to which Christ's reign would end in 1260, and the reign of the Spirit then begin; which declared the Greek Church to be Sodom, and the Latin Church Gomorrah; which held the Roman Court to be the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse!

It is important to notice how, in these successive movements, everything that has happened in the world has borne its part. The unity of life shows itself in this, that nothing takes place in one department of it that does not react on all the rest. The attempt to shut off theology into a water-tight compartment, to make its positions independent of the general world-progress, is always a failure. Every discovery in science tells, sooner or later, upon divinity. The Copernican astronomy upset the geo-centric theory on which the Church built so many of its earlier assumptions. Geology played havoc with the infallibility of Genesis. In like manner the sheer growth of the general moral consciousness has made it impossible for us to accept the punishment theories that seemed natural to a crueller time. The one infallible revelation is the revelation that is going on from age to age in the mind and soul of humanity.

The question remains, What, in view of all this, should be our attitude to religious transition? Do the facts shut us up to an Agnosticism which sees no purpose in the world, no serious meaning in life? Or to Newmanism, which finds refuge only in the infallibility of Rome? Or to that timid brand of Protestantism which harks back on its own past, and looks with undisguised terror on the

future? In what has been already said seems to us the sufficient answer. The past, if we have truly read it, offers us the key to the future. It shows us, what, indeed, is all we need to know, that "a God orders the march." We cannot stay the march if we try. It would be impious to attempt it, for the movement is so clearly divine, so plainly toward the highest spiritual end. The records of the journey should surely be of this the sufficient proof, for do they not show us how in the mighty process there are no steps backward; how conceptions which served their turn in the ages they fitted are replaced by higher ones when their work is done; how the forces that work in the mind and those that move in the soul are united in the production of a common end; and how amid all the changes wrought by the vast transitions which religion has witnessed nothing of spiritual value has ever been lost?

Our own soul, in its solitary journey, if faithful to the highest in it, becomes ever more conscious of a Divine leading. Its transitions are progresses, successive disclosures of the revelation that goes on within. The outer universe, opening to us at every turn its new exhaustless energies, reveals itself as symbol and faint expression of a diviner universe behind. More sure do we become, as the years pass, that our intellect is fed from a higher intellect, that our heart draws its inspiration from a greater heart. As surely as our bodily eye opens to us a visible world of matter and force, so surely does the soul's eye reveal one whose powers are higher. As surely as holiness is greater than

gravitation, so surely is the kingdom of holiness the real and enduring kingdom. Our greatest knowledge is our knowledge of values. The highest in us points to the highest without us. Science knows that God is Power ; the soul knows that God is Love.

XI

The Church's Great Moment

“NEVER before were so many men filled with such longing as to-day for firm and consistent convictions. Men are ready to-day to give anything for a conviction that is real conviction—for a belief that really is believed in. The demand is for a faith in which there is real faith; men require convictions as to the meaning of life.” It was in these words that Harnack, in an address to the Prussian clergy, and dealing with the attitude of the Social Democrats to religion, described the spiritual situation in Germany. But their application is by no means a local one. The state of things beyond the Rhine is the state of things in England, in America, everywhere amongst the educated peoples of Christendom. Men long for a basis of life which shall be as credible to the intellect as it is inspiring to the soul. They want a religion into which their whole manhood can go. And this is what at present they have failed to find. The Church, they say, feeds the heart at the expense of the brain. And so it has, to the modern man, become as unsatisfying in one way as the world is in another. The disaster that has happened to it is that people

have come to repeat its creed in a quite different sense from that in which they repeat the creed of electricity or mechanics. This last is actual belief, a belief by which they run trains or build bridges. The other is, in part at least, make-believe. And the teachers of it are often in worse case than the people. In Sainte Beuve's words, "*Ils se font prophètes afin de tâcher d'être croyants.*"

The saying of another witty Frenchman concerning Catholicism in his own country is, in a sense, true of the entire Church as it exists in modern civilisation. "We can do neither with it nor without it." Men cannot do without it, and for the reason that, with all its defects and limitations, it contains the very salt of life. Our age, and some others behind, have tried their best to dispense with it. They have made experiments in two directions; in that of the intellect and that of the senses. They have both been failures. Science, which within the last fifty years has given us a new universe, with all the secrets it unlocks, has not yet stumbled on the secret of happiness. We are still trying hard at the other experiment, that of the senses. Wealth is the minister of the senses and ours is the age of millionaires. But in our rage for money we have forgotten to inquire as to its purchasing power. It can buy you houses, lands, furniture, Lucullus banquets—in fact, world, flesh and devil. But in your luxurious hotel, as you drink the champagne and order about the obsequious waiters, and receive the homage of those who would make their profit in you, you discover there is a class of things not contained in the *menu*, and which not all the resources of the manager

can procure for you. It is that class of things by which the soul lives. Those invisibles we call love, joy, peace, temperance, meekness, faith; the commodities known as fidelity, comradeship, trust; the disciplines by which man becomes conscious of his best self, of the Divine in him and around him; these are the articles with which neither your banker nor your hotel manager can supply you. How they would stare if you asked them to! And yet without these things you are miserable. Said Boswell to Johnson as they were going over Lord Scarsdale's mansion at Keddlestone: "One would think the proprietor of all this *must* be happy." "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "all this excludes but one evil—poverty."

The supreme moment for the Church lies in the fact that modern society is finding all this out for itself. It discovers that neither in science nor in wealth lies the satisfaction it craves. But the pity of the situation is that when it turns from these sources to religion, as ordinarily exhibited, it fares almost as badly. It finds it cannot do without it, but equally that it cannot do with it. And for the reason that the Church, while providing one spiritual good, blocks the way to another. It offers peace at the expense of truth. And this at a time when the world, by its training in science, is beginning to appreciate truth as never before, as amongst the highest of all possible goods, as the first essential of the soul's prosperity. Is it not time that the Church, talking as it does to-day about "the restoration of belief," should recognise that its prime duty is to offer men something they can believe? It must pay its

long-standing debt to the world's intellect. It must make its door high enough to enable the entire man to enter, head and all, without stooping—or decapitation. In order to recover its lost place in the world the Church must have at least as lofty a cult for the mind as it has for the heart.

And to set itself right in this matter its first business will be to make clear to all and sundry precisely what Christianity does, and what it does not, stand for ; what part of it, as it has come down to us, is a priceless and eternal possession, and what part of it is accidental, transitory, a mere time vesture, now worn out. And to strike the cleavage line here is, with our modern knowledge, after all not so difficult as one might think. To reach it we cannot do better than go back to the Gospel's beginning, to the great moment when this new thing came upon the world. Observing primitive Christianity in actual operation we can by careful attention dissect the elements of which it was composed, and separate the gold from the alloy needed to work it.

As we study the Christian communities of the Apostolic age we find them occupied by two widely different inner positions. These were first their current ideas, and second—and chiefly to be noted—their new condition of feeling. It has been a disastrous mistake which the Church, from then till now, has persisted in making, to put these two things on the same level, to bind them as of equal authority on us who have followed. Whereas the difference between them is as the difference between time and eternity. The early Christian opinions were im-

portant enough—to the early Christians. We see how those opinions influenced their actions. Their idea, for instance, of an immediate appearing of the Master and end of the world affected their conduct in a thousand ways. To give up their possessions, to take no thought for the morrow, to have no care for the great world developments, for the vast movements of commerce and of science with which we are so occupied, was entirely natural for people who looked in their generation for a transformation scene which would bring in a new heaven and a new earth. But such a view is as impossible for us as it was natural for them. It was part of a cosmic outlook which we now regard as naïve and child-like. The early Christians, as we must now recognise, have nothing to teach us in the scientific domain. We know a thousand times more about the universe than they did; about its history in the past, and its possibilities in the future.

When it is asked how a position of this kind relates itself to the acceptance of Christianity as a religion of eternal truth and life, the answer is simple. Early Christianity did its own business in its own way. It was the way of the spiritual process as we see it everywhere and always. It was in itself an incarnation—a spirit clothing itself in a body. The body was of the earth earthy, and of the time timeous and transient. The Master Himself was, in His appearing, obedient to this law. His eternal was clad in a temporal vesture. His very mind, so far as opinion went, was steeped in the colour of the time. It had the limitations of the period. No one would go to His teaching as reported in the Gospels

for information about geology or molecular physics. We have to recognise that in that spiritual evolution of our race in the centre of which Christianity finds itself, the homely methods of illusion have been suffered to play their part. Heaven, let us never forget, has its method of illusion. It is, we suppose, a part of its humour. Children begin with illusion, and find their way by degrees to the truth. And we children of a larger growth are treated similarly. The eternal treasure of the Gospel had this as part of its wrappage. To deny that is to deny the most obvious of facts; to accuse it is to accuse the method of the universe.

When, as truth compels us, we have conceded all this, what remains? For answer we say the whole gospel of redemption. We can now, unharassed and unencumbered, without concealment or *arrière pensée*, point the modern man to Christianity's inestimable and enduring treasure. We come again to the Church's first age, not to discuss its crudity of opinion, but to recognise its unique gift to the world. That gift was an unspeakable joy and an incomparable spiritual reinforcement. No one can understandingly read the story without realising this. Matthew Arnold saw it, and has put his impression in unforgettable words: "It is this which made the fortune of Christianity, its gladness not its sorrow; not its assigning the spiritual world to Christ and the material world to the devil, but its drawing from the spiritual world a source of joy so abundant that it ran over upon the material world and transfigured it." There is no doubt either as to where the joy came from. It centred

in a Person, whose presence was felt in the soul, and who had taught people the Divine secret of loving and of serving. What matter to us their notions about Antichrist or the millennium! What *does* matter, and that infinitely, is their secret of living and of loving. They had tasted the purest joy that a human soul can know, a joy which no Ritz banquet will ever furnish you. And that was the actual contact with a Perfect Love. It was in this lay the Divinity of their Master; here was His eternal gift. It was because the weary world had never in its long history tasted such joy and felt in its veins so conquering a power as now appeared in it, that we call this the Church's great moment.

It conquered not so much by teaching as by giving. The Christian love offered itself everywhere without expectation of return. It lent itself "hoping for nothing again." As that early Christian, the unknown writer of the Epistle to Diognetus, puts it: "They love all men and are persecuted by all; they are poor and make many rich; they lack all things and abound in all." The transfiguring power of this new spirit turned dungeons into palaces. Read the diary of that lovely soul, Perpetua, the young mother delivered at Carthage to the wild beasts for her faith. She writes: "The gaol became to me suddenly like a palace, so that I liked to be there better than anywhere else." The disciples felt, as Justin Martyr has it, that nothing that happened to them could be an evil so long as their Lord was with them.

And that, we say, is Christianity, the eternal religion. It is love thrilled by a felt contact with

One whose life and soul were Love Incarnate, love that goes forth in constant joyful service. It is the Church's mission to preach, and still more to exhibit this as the whole secret of living. When we contrast the programme with the course that has actually been taken, we realise at once the enormous amount of ground and of time that have been lost. The Church, century after century, has been trying to stuff the brain—and that with most inferior material—instead of to train the heart. The world, breaking here from the tutelage of the Church, has of late carried on its own intellectual affairs to its enormous mental advantage. But its heart is starved. What it craves now is precisely the thing Christianity has to give, if it will only open its treasure house.

When the Church reaches once more that first temper; when it offers to men what the first believers offered, its great moment will have come again. It has centuries of lost time to make up. It has to retrace long leagues of wandering in order to get back to the track. We need not trouble about the revelation of truth. That is streaming in upon us from all quarters. What we want is to enter again into the Gospel's open secret. When the Church has caught afresh its first great rapture of love and set it forth in the works that follow, there will be no infidels in sight.

Part II

S O C I A L

XII

The Social Pressure

VICTOR HUGO once spoke of the poor as the caryatides of modern civilisation ; pathetic human figures upbearing on their patient shoulders the whole enormous weight of the social structure. The figure is undoubtedly an exaggeration. In some important respects it is, indeed, the very opposite of the truth. The pressure of the social system, in so far as it is actively realised, is felt at its utmost by the men who are highest rather than by those who are lowest. It is the statesman, harassed daily and nightly by his enormous responsibilities ; the prophet of the age who carries in his soul the burden of its sin and need, far more than the hand worker, who know the downward thrust of the mass they help to carry.

Nevertheless the simile of the great Frenchman remains with us as setting forth vividly and with sufficient accuracy the features of a position which is becoming to the modern world daily more intolerable. Amongst our poor there is a pressure being applied, not indeed of imperial anxieties, of the burdens of the State, but of sheer material conditions which, as the weight of them increases,

squeezes out all the fine flavour of living, and leaves only a dull endurance behind. That in itself is no new thing. What is new is the social consciousness about it. The world to-day is not comfortable at its meals. A whiff from the Chicago stockyards blows across the dinner table and spoils the appetite. Nearer home we have "Sweating Exhibitions," with revelations scarcely less discomposing. Here we see good honest people making 144 match-boxes in order to earn twopence. And that is not the worst. Down in this pit, where our brethren have been thrust to struggle in its black darkness for breath and life, all the conditions are topsy-turvy. Higher up it is not only that money is earned quickly and easily; there is the same advantage in the spending of it. At the bottom it is the other way—you earn the minimum, you are compelled to spend the maximum. In the middle-class a man with £800 a year will give perhaps £80 a year for his house, and think it enough. He secures a relatively commodious and well-situated dwelling for a tenth of his income. Our match-box makers, man and wife, who by unremitting toil, at a gross for twopence, earn together twelve shillings a week, spend probably six shillings of it on the rent of two fetid rooms. For a tenth of his income our middle-class man gets what to these others would be a palace; for their own squalid holes they pay fifty per cent. of the income. Sweated London is indeed the "city of dreadful night." As we contemplate it we are reminded of the speculation of old Vanini, who, when he saw the misery about him,

asked whether men were not evil spirits who had passed into human form and were now atoning for their crimes !

But is pessimism the proper attitude here ? We do not think so. "Despair," said Vauvenargues, "is the worst of our errors," and the adage is as applicable to the misfortunes of others as to our own. The remarkable thing is that the poor themselves, the victims of our present system, are not themselves pessimists. We see a great deal more of their need than they do themselves. Nature, who means well by us all, brings in here her kindly art of the balance. She so cunningly fits the consciousness to the condition. The pig enjoys his sty better than any palace we could build for him. And remember, all of us, as compared with the ideal state, are in the sty. M. Lévy-Bruhl holds that "our civilisation in some respects will seem as repulsive to our descendants of the fiftieth century as that of Dahomey does to us." He may be right, but our deplorable inferiority to the coming fiftieth century does not disgust us with life as it is. It is astonishing on what a small capital a sense of happiness will maintain itself. What to the outsider seems sheer misery is not so to the soul inside. Were it otherwise men would not go on living.

But considerations of this kind, while an argument against pessimism, are no argument for the *status quo*. The best feature of the present situation is the revolt against it. As we have already observed, what is new in the condition is the feeling about it. Society has in its heart a redemptive force which yearns to deliver the captive and to break every

yoke. Imagine the moral distance we have travelled from the day when mediæval barons could feast merrily in their halls, all the merrier for knowing that sixty feet down beneath them were miserable wretches, their captives, suffocating in horrible *oubliettes*, without light or air or hope! To-day we do not feel it right to claim our happiness while our fellow-creatures are unhappy. Another hopeful element in the consciousness of to-day is the growing certainty that there is no human wrong that cannot be set right. We believe that good is not only better than bad, but that it is stronger and is going to win. The bad things are being beaten one by one. The Chicago scandals were bad, but Southern slavery was worse. America, which put down slavery, will, if we give her time, put her other bad things down. England by her Factory Acts swept away the horrors of forced and infantile labour in the mills. Now that the public conscience is awake she will carry the same reform into the homes.

The problem of the social pressure is a tremendous one, full of every imaginable complication, yet we are beginning to see our way in it. What has to be done, we recognise, is to untangle the several threads of it and follow them up. Some of the apparently most hopeless features look far less hopeless to-day than they did not long ago. John Stuart Mill's pessimistic conclusion, for instance, that, whatever our methods of relief, the population would go on increasing always to starvation point, is no longer held. There are, instead, nations already crying out that their population is decreasing.

But keeping now to the people who are here,

what do we find ? At our bottom stage we have three ragged regiments—the badly employed, the unemployed, the unemployable. But there is one classification that includes them all, and which has to be remembered in any scheme of reform. These people almost without exception are the unskilled. The honest among them are sweated because they know no craft that will bring them a better wage. Ability always commands its price. But now the question is, Can we not to a certain extent create ability ? While the nation is spending all this money on education, might it not use some of it in teaching brains and fingers to earn a living ? What better schooling, after all, than that which puts every social unit on the way to independence ? And when in addition the State has learned the lesson that it has not done with its young when they have reached the age of thirteen, but enters then on its chief responsibility towards them ; when, realising this, it secures to our youth the old apprenticeship system, or some efficient substitute for it, we shall by degrees clear out of the way this huge, helpless element of the unskilled, who at present are the despair of the philanthropist.

Take another side of the question. Our badly employed are, we say, badly paid and badly housed. The unemployed are badly housed and not paid at all. How has this state of things arisen ? Here is the problem of the land and of the city. The people have drained from the country into the town, till the town is gorged. There are two men for one job, hence the wage of it goes down ; there are two men for the one room, hence the price of it goes up.

Evidently this process must be stopped. And it will be stopped by making country work at once attractive and profitable. We are ripe to-day for a rural renaissance. France was saved from ruin by the Revolution, which transformed it from feudalism to a system of peasant proprietors. A still more modern instance is Denmark, which a century ago was a land of large estates, as England is to-day. It, too, has become a land of peasant proprietors. The State has passed Acts which enabled the labourers to purchase small holdings. In addition it has established agricultural schools, a system of co-operation and of cheap railway rates. It turned from unprofitable corn-growing to butter, bacon and eggs. The result is that Denmark is to-day, perhaps, the most flourishing agricultural country in the world. It is next to us in wealth, but ahead of us in that, while our wealth is concentrated, hers is diffused. When England, following this example, finds the moral courage to break with its feudalism and to open the land to the people, half its poverty problem will have been solved.

Meantime we have the people in the towns sweated at their work, hosts of them unemployed, herding in unspeakable tenements. Can we not straightway introduce here some betterment? There is no doubt of it. We have so much to learn in these matters from our better-instructed neighbours. Germany, for instance, is, in this whole civic problem, miles ahead of us. Why have we not the counterpart of its splendid Labour Bureaux such as those which in Prussia, Wurtemberg,

Baden and Bavaria filled up last year close on half a million situations? Why not buildings like those in Berlin, where in waiting-rooms, supplied with books, newspapers and refreshments almost at cost price, the unemployed gather to receive information as to all the openings in their own line? Why have we not in our great towns something at least as good as the Elberfeldt system, under which in the great German cities the municipalities have organised an army of unpaid visitors of the poor, a system by which, in times of need, every man, woman and child in the several districts is secured from want, and that without any breaking up of the home?

And, lastly, the badly employed, the sweated people, our matchbox makers, our fur-pullers, our sack-stitchers and the like. Is there no remedy for their condition? The Germans believe there is, and so do our Australian cousins. In the Reichstag the Social Democrats have introduced a Bill for regulating home industries which fixes the minimum cubic space for each worker, compels the registration both of workers and employers, and fixes the rate of wages by local Conciliation Boards. In the clothing trade in Victoria a council has been established, representing both employers and employed, which fixes the rate of wages, and is working successfully to the enormous benefit of the home worker. It is quite certain we must have some such development in England. Where home industries are carried on there must be inspection of the homes. The State must interpose itself between the sweater and his victim, as it interposed itself eighty years ago

between the manufacturer and the workhouse boy-and-girl slaves he employed.

England is, it is evident, awaking to the facts of the present position. Its conscience is stirred. It is aware there is something wrong. But it is not fully awake. It is not so aware as it should be of its immediate responsibility. Shall we palter with our miserable conventions, be tied for ever by our feudal traditions, when, if we will only put forth the strength that is in our hand, guided by the knowledge that is in our brain, we can straightway drain dry the Serbonian bog in which our poor are weltering, and plant them out on wholesome ground, in full view of the sun ?

XIII

Our Unprotected Classes

IN the last chapter we discussed some phases of the social problem as it offers itself to-day in England. We dealt specially with the "three ragged regiments" at the bottom of our system—the badly employed, the unemployed and the unemployable. But there are people who, while technically not at the bottom, are nevertheless underneath—in a position which to them seems one exactly between the upper and the nether millstones, and who feel all the mercilessness of their inexorable grind. We are beginning to wonder whether the bottom dog of all is most to be pitied, whether others, better fed, maybe, than our stray mongrel, are not really worse off, fattened perhaps for the vivisection-table! Of what avail to promote you from the cellar to the ground-floor, if it is only that you may daily feel the cold steel cutting into nerve and tendon? As we listen to these stories of driven and tortured people, we realise how utterly anomalous, ragged and patched a thing our civilisation is. We could make a new division of society, into the protected and the unprotected. And the division, as we shall see, is not the same

as the common one between the "upper" and the "lower" classes. It cuts across these distinctions. It is not the artisan who is unprotected. The sharpest pinch of our present system is felt elsewhere.

Before coming to particulars of what we mean, it may be worth while to remark on that new social consciousness which is rising in our midst, and which is impelling men of all classes and shades of opinion to discuss these themes as they were never discussed before. We are reaching an idea of the State and its functions which, before we have finished with it, will make all things new. It is curious to note here the difference between the modern feeling on this theme and that of the early world. The Greek philosophers had a very clear—and, in some respects, a very high—conception of society considered as a universal bond. But the emphasis here was on the duty of the individual to the State, not the duty of the State to the individual. Never, surely, was this view carried to a loftier height than where Socrates, in the "Crito," sketches the place of the citizen: "Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor? . . . And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence; and if she leads us to death or wounds in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may anyone yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must

do what his city and his country order him." A fine development indeed of the communal conscience on one side—one which, if we measured ourselves by it, would make some of us look sufficiently small. But the Greek had no feeling such as throbs in us to-day for the other side of the account. He had small sense of that common responsibility for the well-being of every member of the State which is the note of the finest spirits of our time. The fact that he built society on slavery as a normal condition is sufficient evidence of that.

But in this new light of to-day how do matters look? Under the Divine pressure of the Christian sentiment our programme, we say, is of a new solidarity in which we will indeed "bear each other's burdens"; share the burden so that it shall not press unfairly on any shoulders; be satisfied with nothing less than a social state which secures to every soul in it its opportunity of happiness. As we study the actual condition, however, what do we find? A society entirely out of hand; some portions organised into effectiveness and security, while other great masses of it are struggling helpless in the grip of alien and merciless powers.

Who and where are our unprotected classes? To begin at the beginning one cannot forbear a word, if only a word in passing, on the most helpless of all, the babes born yesterday. It is a state of things infinitely humiliating, but which we have to face, that over large tracts of English life the mother-instinct is not to be trusted as the guardian of infancy. We have left the children

to that with the result that they die like flies. The statistics, in some of our northern towns especially, are too awful to contemplate. We think twenty in a thousand a sufficiently high death-rate for grown-up people. What think we of 274 babes per thousand as the death-rate of some Lancashire towns? These children are born into death-traps. Lucretius, in his pessimistic way, compares the new-born child to a shipwrecked mariner cast on a barren shore; its wail fitting to a being with so much trouble to pass through. The simile is not harsh enough for the conditions we are here considering. The wail in these cases would be not so much that of a mariner wondering where he will get his subsistence, as of a prisoner expecting immediate execution. These deaths come not so much from heartlessness as from ignorance and the pressure of unwholesome surroundings. And the mother-soul of the community, its best heart and mind, has now for its task an education of our women workers in true motherhood, and such a bettering of home conditions as shall give both mother and child a chance.

It is not, however, here that the shoe pinches most. The child does not know its disabilities or its danger. The most really hapless of our community are those who know all the hardness of their lot and see no shield against it or escape from it. What of our drapers' assistants, clerks and warehousemen? As we read their stories, our question is whether in the whole of our social fabric there are any more tightly wedged or harder pressed than these? We hear of shop employés

who are compelled to tell lies as part of the day's work ; to be co-partners in fraud without, however, sharing the profits. While the artisan has his free Saturday afternoon and evening, this black-coated brother of his, on a pittance often lower than his own, is toiling till midnight. What becomes of shop assistants when they grow old ? H. G. Wells, who knows his subject at first-hand, gives us the reply in " Kipps " : " When you get too old to work they chuck you away. Lor, you find old drapers everywhere—tramps, beggars, dock labourers, 'bus conductors—quod. Anywhere but in a crib. I tell you we're in a blessed drainpipe, and we've got to crawl along it till we die." One wonders how many fellow-citizens in this " merrie England " of ours find themselves to-day in precisely this situation ; who have no capital and no chance of saving any ; who, well or ill, have to stand to their work, knowing the eyes that are on them, the fines waiting to be inflicted, the notice to quit which hangs over them ; who shudder at the thought of growing old, knowing this to be the unpardonable sin ; who are without joy in the present and with no future that will bear looking at !

And on either side of this forlorn tract of our English life stretch others, which, perhaps, exceed it in forlornness. There is the case of the " general " in the poorer households. Dickens sketched this for us in " the small servant," whom Mr. Dick Swiveller dubbed " the Marchioness " :

" Do you see this ? " said Miss Brass, shaving off about two square inches of cold mutton, after all this preparation, and holding it out on the point of the fork.

The small servant looked hard enough at it with her hungry eyes to see every shred of it, small as it was, and answered "Yes."

"Then don't you ever go and say," retorted Miss Sally, "that you hadn't meat here."

One could add without end to the list of our unprotected. There are governesses, strangers in the household, suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between the two worlds of the drawing-room and the kitchen, recognised by neither; the barmaids exposed for their livelihood to endlessly long hours, to poisonous fumes, to the worst temptations. To right and left of us, on all sides indeed, stretches this weary, dispirited array of our undefended. It is time to ask some questions about them.

We perceive three factors entering into their condition, and to be reckoned with in any proposed amelioration; these are the State, the employer, and themselves. Let us take the last first. When we look over the classes we have enumerated, and others who are allied to them, we are struck with one fact. They all of them, from the assistant in the shop to Mary Anne in the kitchen, are in the class of the unorganised. It seems never to have occurred to these workers to inquire how other classes have attained their liberties. The working man is considered a grade lower socially than the shopman, but he has attained to freedom, to privileges, to an independence beyond the dreams of the other. And he has done this simply by combination. He has opposed power to power and won by that. It may seem a humiliating truth, but it is one which all historians and sociologists now recognise, that so far spiritual and moral

agencies alone have never succeeded in bringing about social amelioration. The extinction of slavery in Europe was not brought about by Christian preaching. For centuries after Christianity had established itself slavery was accepted as part of the social order. We had slaves in England up to the reign of Edward VI. A great class change comes from a redistribution of power. To move anything, whether a people or a mountain, you must get the requisite pressure. As long as the artisan class was unorganised its power, so far as its own objects were concerned, was a waste Niagara, an unharnessed energy roaring uselessly into the abyss. When its thinkers came along, and drilled and regimented the workers into unions and trade combinations, their Niagara, harnessed this time, and turned on the machine, showed itself irresistible over the whole realm of industry. When our unprotected classes have in like manner realised their latent energy; when thinkers arise amongst them, who, with knowledge of their special needs, know how to combine for securing them, their day of deliverance will dawn. Every class, in a degree at least, works out its own salvation.

Meantime the employer. We should be grievously misunderstood if what has been said were regarded as an attempt to set one class against another, or as an indictment of the employer class as such. One recognises with gladness the great and, we believe, constantly increasing host of large-minded employers who make the interest of their workers their own, who believe with Ruskin that "the only wealth consists in noble and happy

human beings." We know, too, that many employers drive because they themselves are driven. They, with the people under them, are the victims alike of a remorseless competition. Yet there are two things to be said to our capitalist brother ; two things to warn him against. One is the fatal notion, which all the slavery systems of the past and all the Protectionist systems of to-day have consciously or unconsciously acted upon—that human life, like the raw materials of production, is a means to an end, that end being the creation of wealth. A fatal notion we say, as opposed to political economy as it is to heaven's economy. For no community and no trade system will ever prosper or has ever prospered which regards human life as a mere means, as anything less than an end in itself. When your system depresses the human, it depresses and in the end ruins everything, yourself included. It is as good as over with you, my friend, when your one aim is at all costs to possess money ; " to possess it," as says prophet Carlyle, " to have your bloated vanities fostered into monstrosity by it, your foul passions blown into explosion by it, your heart and perhaps your very stomach ruined with intoxication by it ; your poor life and all its manifold activities stunned into frenzy and comatose sleep by it—in one word, as the old prophets said, your soul for ever lost by it."

And the other warning—one for women employers in households not less than men employers in shop and warehouse—is against the lust of mere ordering, of governing, of the exercise of power. When all possible readjustments have been made, when

every class has secured its fullest possible liberties, it will yet remain, and that by the very order of Nature, that the mass of our fellow-creatures will be, in some way or other, under direction, unprotected, in the sense of being exposed to the full force of another's volition. The children will be ever thus. And as long as the world lasts the weaker will stand over against the stronger and be ruled by him. In the whole realm of things there is surely no mandate more imperious laid upon us than this, to secure a proper education and governance of ourselves in the use of power. The world will not have reached its happiness until every holder of power—the parent with the child, the mistress with the maid, the master with the servant—has, in using it, learned and caught the spirit of Christ.

XIV

The State and Happiness

IN the last chapter we mentioned three factors as entering into a possible social amelioration—the employés themselves, the employers, and the State. This last demands a separate and special treatment. By the State here, let it be observed, we do not mean the Government simply, but the community at large—the whole sum of its activities as affecting the lot of each separate individual. The question now before us is, how far it is in the power of our social system to secure the essential well-being of the men, women and children who compose it ; whether, in a word, it is possible in any degree “ to organise happiness ” ?

It is hardly necessary at this time of day to argue the question whether man is entitled to happiness or intended for it. There have been ages, and at no great distance from our own, when that was distinctly arguable. There are, indeed, creeds extant to-day which represent man as intended for something quite the opposite of happiness—as under a curse, with a vast proportion of his number born for the express purpose of being damned. But to-day we search in vain for believers in them.

All true science and all sane philosophy recognise pleasure as one of Nature's most clearly-marked ends. When we speak of duty, of labour, of sacrifice, of spiritual development as great objects of life, we are offering no contradiction to the earlier thesis. For duty, labour, sacrifice, development have, all of them, their own pleasures attached. The difference between high and low in ethics is, we see, a difference in the quality of pleasure. If Nature has any articulate message at all, this surely, of her design for our happiness, is one of the distinctest. All her normal and healthy states yield this as their product. Towards this tend her marvellous and fine-strung adaptations; her attunement of melody to the ear, of beauty to the eye, of fruit to the taste, of truth to the mind. Every faculty in its exercise yields its joy; we can dig our pleasure out of the ground, breathe it in with the morning air, meet it on the printed page, hear it in the voice of our friend. The world would seem to exist that from every eye there might beam, in every heart there might thrill, this exquisite, invisible something we call happiness.

It is not necessary here either to enlarge on the point that individual happiness, of any deep or durable kind, depends on things which no social manipulation can of itself secure. Man is a spiritual being in a spiritual universe. As Carlyle has it, "the spiritual everywhere originates the practical, models it, makes it."

It takes a soul

To move a body; it takes a high-souled man

To move the masses . . . even to a cleaner sty.

We will take that for granted, and come now to what some of us have not so clearly seen—that man cannot reach his true spiritual estate apart from a true social one. Just as in this world his soul cannot get on without his body, any more than his body can get on without his soul, so in the community the two things have ever to go together. Let anyone who imagines that, in attending to a man's spiritual requirements all has been done for him, re-read the first chapters in the history of Christianity. One of the immediate results of the Day of Pentecost was a redistribution of property. By that act the early Church affirmed for all time the principle that the production of inner emotions is not enough as a religious work. There must also be the production of right external conditions. And the Church Fathers of succeeding centuries were never weary of insisting on that point. Let anyone read the utterances on the subject of wealth and poverty of Tertullian, of Basil, of Jerome, of Chrysostom, and he will find that these men at least knew the connection between economics and the highest human welfare.

What, then, are the true social conditions? What can the State, the community in its corporate capacity, do as an organiser of happiness? This is an old theme; one, indeed, that has been the fascination of philosophers in every age. It is distinctly damping to study, one after another, the schemes of social perfection that have floated before the minds of men from Plato to Condorcet, from More to Fourier. They have come to so little. As John Morley has said, it is one of the

discouragements of the student of history that he finds ideas uttered one or two or twenty centuries ago which are just as useful and just as little heeded now as they were when they were made. Man is so slow-moving an animal, His vision travels so much faster than his feet. With a single glance of the eye he beholds the distant summit which it takes him endless painful climbing to reach.

But the ideas of gossellers and philosophers alike, on these points, though as yet far from realised, are not lost. We are nearer to them, indeed, to-day than the world has ever been before. Profoundly interesting is it to note how these utterances and schemes, scattered over the ages, all converge upon one point. There is an extraordinary and, as it were, fateful unanimity in them. The message of the primitive Church, the utterances of the Fathers, the "Republic" of a Plato, the "Utopia" of a More, the economic and social schemes of a Proudhon and a Saint Simon, make, taken together, a very curious medley of reading. One could hardly imagine a wider divergence both of temper and of standpoint. And yet these seemingly discordant voices are actually sounding one note. You can boil down their systems into a word. They all preach Socialism. Plato in his Republic would have no excessively rich and no excessively poor; Tertullian declares "everything must be in common among us, except women"; More, in the "Utopia," argues that "the one way to the wealth of a community is that equality of all things should be brought in and established"; Fourier would divide the community into great

common households, with a division of labour which should give the chief honours and rewards to those who performed the most unpleasant and drudging tasks. Later there have been the Paris "national workshops" of 1848, and the anti-capitalist propaganda of a Karl Marx and a Lassalle.

What, now, is the significance of this note? Where are we to-day as to Socialism? Assuredly it is to be reckoned with. A great deal of its contention is already practically accepted. Christian ethics on the one side and economic science on the other have been working for its victory. The conception of society as an organism, every part of which is vitally related to every other; the ill-health of one organ meaning the ill-health of all, is fast capturing not only the mind of the thinkers, but the imagination of the populace, and will undoubtedly dominate the legislation of the coming years. Unlimited *laissez faire* is doomed as a policy. The State is a family, every member of which, for his own sake and for the sake of the entire household, is to be looked after.

But how far is this common concern and common supervision to go? It is here, amid all the schemes that are afoot, we reach the parting of the ways. There are socialisms and socialisms. The term includes ideas fertile, fruitful and already half realised, together with extravagances which the best minds have already seen through and dropped as impossible. Amongst the latter is the notion of extinguishing the private ownership of property. The sense of possession is one of the primitive human instincts, and whoever starts to fight those

is running his head against the thickest of stone walls. No system founded on such a principle has ever lasted. The New Testament communism speedily merged into one which recognised individual rights. The sense of property is one of Nature's greatest incentives to labour and one of her chiefest rewards. It offers a happiness of its own, solid, intense and enduring, which humanity cannot afford to part with. Think of the diffused joy among the eight million peasant proprietors of France; the deep-seated satisfaction with which these sturdy toilers put spade and plough into a soil which they call their own! The man who owns, though it be a solitary acre, or the smallest of Savings-Bank accounts, is no anti-capitalist. He will not be robbed of his bliss of possession. Private property, earned and held as the reward of labour, is part of that nature-scheme of individual development, by which evolution works to the constant enlargement of our race. To abolish it would mean the death of progress.

Where then does our Socialism come in? The mention of the French peasant proprietors supplies us with the answer. The true Socialism proposes not the extinction of property but its universal diffusion. We would give every man his joy of individual possession. It is here, in a larger system, that individualism and communism can meet and combine their separate advantages. We want all that develops individuality; we want also all that solidarity can offer. The policy of to-morrow will be a union of these two. The end is the highest well-being of every individual man; the means,

the use for his benefit of all that the wisest combination can secure.

But this principle, or union of principles, will, in the matter of capital and ownership, work out one particular result. It will secure the individual right of possession, but it will limit the extent of possession. We all recognise that individual liberty, precious though it be, has to be limited in certain directions in the interests of society generally—of the larger happiness. I am allowed the possession of a revolver, but not to shoot at large in the street with it. Where the use of a given personal liberty is a proved curse to the community, society has no scruples in curtailing it. And this curtailment in the general interest will unquestionably come in the matter of ownership. We are already clear on certain applications of the principle. We run a public road through private property, a road on which the pauper has the same rights as the millionaire. Were a multi-billionaire to propose to buy up Middlesex, his billions would be of no avail against the public sentiment. But we are on the way to further applications. In the interest of the highest happiness of the highest number society in the now near future will lessen the gap between extreme riches and extreme poverty. The idle rich and the idle poor are equally a misery to themselves and a danger to the community, and the community will not continue indefinitely to tolerate their existence. In their own interests and in that of the common weal it will furnish them both with a conscience—its own conscience—with occupation and with an end in life. By an income-tax which

will absorb private accumulations beyond a certain amount, or by other means, society will secure that the wealth of the nation shall be diffused rather than concentrated, that its surpluses shall be devoted to the development and happiness of the many rather than to the ruin, through extravagance, of the few.

Another of the great private possessions of life is time, and here also the State will intervene to secure an equitable distribution. "What time may possibly be spared from the necessary occupations and affairs of the Commonwealth, all that the citizens should withdraw from the bodily service to the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same." This ideal of the "Utopia" is one which we are far enough as yet from realising. The employé in shop or warehouse works with one eye on the clock. He lives only, in his own feeling, in the too brief hour that intervenes when the long toil of the counter is over. When businesses are co-operative, and the worker has a personal share in what is going, those work-hours will have, ah! so different a flavour! But meantime, what has been done for the factory in protection of the worker must be done also for the shop. The wage-earner, in this the most trying of all employments, must have his boon of time, a solid freehold each day of hours which he can call his own and when he can feel himself a man.

The State can do much to organise happiness. We are on the eve of vast developments in this direction, developments in which the poor, the ignorant, the unprotected, will find themselves

backed by the highest intelligence, the highest conscience, and the best resources of the community to which they belong. In a railway train every passenger, the stupidest as well as the wisest, shares in the skill of the engineer, the skill that built the road and that carries him along it. What we are now endeavouring for is that, in like manner, every man, woman and child of the community shall have, for the favourable issue of their life-battle, not only what capacity lies in their own poor body and mind, but the reinforcement of the nation's highest brain and heart, to shield, to encourage and to inspire.

XV

The Ethics of Ownership

“WHAT I am complaining of,” says Dr. Gore in one of his Bampton Lectures, “is—not that commercial and social selfishness exists in the world, or even that it appears to dominate in society; but that its profound antagonism to the spirit of Christ is not recognised, that there is not among us anything that can be called an adequate conception of what Christian morality means.” Excellent words, which the Church of all denominations would just now do well to take note of. We wonder whether it has dawned upon the average ecclesiastic that, in the coming generation, the one question that will concern him as well as the rest of us, is not so much the theological as the social question; whether he properly understands that the issue on which the Church will stand or fall is not its attitude to baptism or prevenient grace, but its attitude to the tremendous struggle on which the world is now visibly entering for man’s elementary rights? Here in England, for instance, it is truer than ever what Carlyle said half a century ago: “What the Universe was thought to be in Judæa and other places, this, too, may be very interesting to know; but

what it is in England here, where we live and have our work to do, that is the interesting point." The whole problem of how men should live together, of how they should share amongst them the goods of life, is up for rehearing, and no teaching institution, by whatsoever venerable name it may call itself, will be listened to, unless in these matters it can give a sane and courageous lead.

We have, in previous chapters, been dealing with certain aspects of this question, and what has already been said leads up naturally to the theme now before us, that of the ethics of property. There is evidently a great deal of fog abroad on the whole theme, and it is desirable to get, if we can, some straight thinking about it.

Let us ask then, at the beginning, what we mean by property, by owning a thing. How do we come to say, "This is mine"; by what right do we say it, and how far does our right go? By our property in a thing, speaking generally, we understand our liberty to use it. The extent of our ownership is the extent of our power to use. If some one bequeathed me the moon, I should be no better off, because I could do nothing with it. Its interior might be of gold or diamond, but I am no richer, because it is out of reach. And if the power to use a thing constitutes the essence of property, it is the actual use which confers much of the right to it. In the most primitive conditions of society, the savage who has worked at his felled tree and shaped it into a canoe is regarded by himself and his neighbour as having a right in it which does not belong to another. Priority of possession, which is held by

sociologists as constituting the original basis of ownership, is also mixed up with this idea of use. The man who found the cave first has the prior claim over the one who comes later, for one thing because he is already there, and for another because he has been making various uses of the shelter.

And it is this idea of use that constitutes the right to permanence in property. It was early realised that a man could not work successfully unless he was secured in the possession of his tools. There could not, in agriculture, be any profitable use of the land unless the sower of the seed could be sure of possession till the harvest. But use, as essential to the idea of property, goes a great deal further than that. We ask sometimes, "How much does a man own?" But concerning what he owns there is another question: "How much does he own it?" And the answer depends again on use. The differences here are enormous and vital. The Red Indians, who for ages wandered over the American continent, owned it, in a fashion. But the white man, who succeeded, has owned it in another. After centuries of occupation the Indian was as poor as when he began. His successor, by superior uses of what he held, has made himself boundlessly rich. He owns America more than the savage did, more by all his mind, by all his faculty of apprehension and appropriation.

There are, indeed, all varieties and intensities of owning. When the poet says to Dives, "The land is yours, the landscape is mine," he suggests two most absolute forms of possession, though we have no scale for determining the two values. A *nouveau*

riche may own a Plato, gorgeously bound, which he has never opened. How different his ownership of the volumes from that of a Porson or a Jowett ! It is, indeed, when we consider property under this master-idea of use that we see how men of small incomes are often wealthier than millionaires. It is the man who is making most and best use of the world he lives in who has the greatest property in it. It was the sense of this which led Faraday, on his £300 a year at the Royal Institution, to refuse offer after offer of wealth which would have led him away from research ; and which made D'Alembert turn from the glittering bribes of Frederick the Great and the Empress Catherine, preferring, as he said, "poverty with freedom." These men with superb faculties for using the Universe, were determined at all costs to be able to use it their own way. That was their notion of property in it.

But all this is preliminary to our main question, the question which Socialism is everywhere pushing to the front, between collective and private ownership. The new contention is that private ownership is wrong ; that the State, the community, should be owner, as the only way of securing justice to the individual. Let us examine this a little. In order to get daylight upon it we must come to first principles. Nature is here our prime instructor. What does she teach ? Her very first lesson is on the inseparable union between these two apparent opposites. "Collective," "Private" ? She insists upon both, and will allow you no property in which the two principles are not conjoined. Joint ownership, for instance, however extended, leaves you in the

end a private owner, for your share in profits is *yours* and not another's. On the other hand private ownership is always in the end a collective affair. The family relationship, which is older than political economy, makes sure of that. The head of the house, who receives the income, never receives it for himself alone. As he looks round on his family he cannot say of his receipts "they are mine"; only "they are ours." And supposing this "owner" stands alone, without family or any directly dependent on him, the collectivism of his ownership still comes in. For in his utmost isolation he owns simply as a tenant of society. It is by the will and tacit agreement of the community he keeps possession of what he has. Apart from this tacit social partnership he could keep nothing.

We can go even deeper than this and still find the same principle. If there be one thing which amid all possible economic revolutions we can still call our very own it would surely be our separate personality. What men cannot rob us of is the treasure of our own thoughts, of our own soul. Yes, but even here we perceive in full operation the system of dual ownership. We do not even know ourselves except in relation to the "not ourself." We can only perceive, can only think, when in partnership with something outside. Going even deeper still, we find our individual consciousness derives its life and its validity from being grounded upon a universal consciousness, of which it and every other individual mind alike partakes. The ownership of our own souls is clearly a partnership.

Here, then, with the nature of things for our

guide, we have surely a sufficiently clear lead on the question before us. Collectivism and individualism in ownership are not, as some suppose, clashing opposites. Nature declares for both, insists on both, in all her combinations makes use of both. The social readjustment will have to follow this order. It has, indeed, done so up to a certain point. What is wanted is to carry the principle courageously forward into departments where as yet it has not been sufficiently recognised. It is, for instance, as we have already pointed out, already accepted in our social system, that private ownership must be limited by the over-ownership of the State. A man owns, uses what he owns, transmits to others what he owns, simply by permission of the community, as expressed in its laws and customs. Where his share in this dual ownership seems by excess to be hurtful to others, society claims the power to redress the balance. It would not allow a millionaire, whatever millions he offered, to buy the square mile of land round the Mansion House and to pull down all its buildings. A single example like this is sufficient to show that the State, the community that is, not only theoretically but practically stands as the one supreme landed proprietor; that private ownership in land is already a delegated, leasehold ownership, limited in a thousand ways by the universal, ultimate owner.

What in the near future is coming, and what all earnest reformers have now diligently to strive for is, then, the proper application of the power which the community already possesses. In the supreme question of the land, for instance, the national

proprietor must put end to those phases of private ownership which are crippling industries and hindering the development of the individual citizen. It must stop the expulsion of men in order to make deer forests. It must abolish the monopoly of proprietorship and shed its joys, as France has done, amongst the millions of the population. The England of to-day, as to its land question, is in exactly the position which brought about the ruin of ancient Rome, where the expropriation of small proprietors and the concentration of almost the entire country in the hands of a few wealthy patricians divorced the people from the soil and drove them into the towns, to lose there the sturdy physique and the republican virtue of their ancestors. We cannot allow, with us, the same process to be carried to the same end.

The community, as overlord, must also limit other forms of private ownership which mitigate against the Commonweal. The public conscience here must curb the aberrations of the private one. America, France and England are already in sight of immense applications of this principle. The death duties already existent are a recognition of the power of the State to control private accumulations and to divert their transmission. Unearned increments which now pour into private pockets, though they are created entirely by the labours of the community, will be diverted to the uses of that community. The sums thus reabsorbed from commerce and industry by the State as chief owner will be used to bridge the gulf between our abject poverty on the one hand and our bloated luxury on the other. The community is rich enough to give all

its constituents a chance. It will do so by its carefully-considered and gradual redistributions. Said Diderot a century and a half ago, "The net profit of a society, if equally distributed, may be preferable to a larger profit, if it be distributed unequally, and have the effect of dividing the people into two classes, one gorged with riches, the other perishing in misery." France has since gone a long way towards realising that programme, and will go further. Western civilisation as a whole is, in fact, to-day in full sight of the principle that the prosperity of the community is contained in the prosperity of the individual, and that the idea of property, as of every other private right, must be brought into full subordination to this common end.

Let us sum up our conclusions. There is inherent in the nature of things the two principles of private and of public ownership. The task of the modern State is so to regulate these two as to secure the highest welfare of the individual and of the community. In this evolution the Churches, if they are to remain as conservators of man's spiritual heritage and as foremost agents of the Divine Kingdom, must take an immediate and a foremost part.

XVI

The Gospel of Work

THE world is to-day asking a thousand questions about labour. The questions are not new ; but they are more insistent than of old, and, what is of chief importance, they seem nearer now than ever before to their solution. Fifty years ago Carlyle preached his gospel of work. Two men, he said, were worthy of respect in this world—the man who toiled with his hands and that other who wrought with sweat of brain. The rest were chaff and rubbish. An excellent doctrine truly, but whether our generation as a whole has been converted to it is more than doubtful. The signs are, indeed, of a retreat rather than an advance in this matter, from the ideals of our fathers. The numbers grow of those who are “born tired,” who do not propose to work if they can help it. Then there is the modern revolt of labour against its conditions, its status, its rewards. If we are solidly to found our “City of God,” we must reach first some sound conclusions on this vital point.

Amid vast confusions and divergencies of view one thing emerges into clear certainty, and we may begin with that. This sure thing is that

man, placed here in his world, was intended to work in it. Nature has fixed him to that by two compulsions, an outer and an inner. The first is the very simple and effective law that if he does not work he shall not eat. To ensure our keeping to the line we are put on a system of short rations. It is the greatest of fallacies to talk of the world's accumulated wealth. As a matter of fact we all live from hand to mouth. A three weeks' universal strike would bring the world to starvation point. Supposing we were all made millionaires to-morrow, we should have to go on working just the same. We should still want bread to eat, clothes to wear, houses to shelter us, fires to warm us. And so our millionaire farmers, tailors, builders and colliers would find their daily task indispensable to themselves and to society. All our property is perishable, most of it quickly perishable, and nothing but a constant forthput of energy will keep us going. Like Father Adam, we occupy our garden on condition of keeping it in order.

The other or inner compulsion is not less clear and imperative. It is ordained in the system of things that man can only preserve health of body and mind by labour. Unemployed human nature is like stagnant water, becoming quickly muddy and foul, a breeder of worms and corruption. It is by constant exercise that our faculties exhibit their possibilities and augment their powers. We only know ourselves, reach ourselves, by energising. There is no abiding happiness away from effort. It is this which makes it so foolish for men to retire from work simply because they have accumulated

money. What is it they are proposing to retire from, themselves, or from the law of nature? These demand from us that, each day, we shall press from the hours the hid treasure our powers can evoke. That pathetic line which Lamb, after his retirement from the Indian Office, wrote to his friend Bernard Barton contains all the truth of the matter: "I pity you for overwork; but I assure you no work is worse. The mind preys on itself—the most unwholesome food." The problem of our unemployed to-day, the necessity of setting them to work somehow, is not so much a problem of production, of the relatively good or bad quality of what they may produce. The problem is that of their own nature, of the wrack and ruin that is going on there, so long as hands and heads are unoccupied; of the poison their character and habits will exhale so long as by idleness they are kept out of the conditions essential to moral health. And at the other end of the social scale the cry against the idle rich, where it is a sane cry, is not against their wealth in itself but against a mental habitude fatal to their own best interests and those of the community.

With this as a beginning, let us look now at some of the more insistent labour questions of our time. The great modern revolt is not against labour so much as against certain kinds of labour. Men want to pick their work. They see in operation a caste system here as rigorous as that of Hinduism. It is a very old system. Plato in Athens and Cicero in Rome alike express their contempt for handicrafts. They are fit for slaves. To-day the root

difficulty in South Africa, a difficulty which promises to hinder permanently the progress of the sub-continent, is the refusal of the white man to do manual work. He leaves it to the black. To soil his hands would be, he thinks, to degrade himself and to lose prestige. There will be neither peace nor prosperity till that fatal notion has been extirpated. And it is all so purely a fashion, an artificial fashion, in thinking! At Eton in the old days the fag—who might be the son of a duke—would make the fire for his senior, fry the sausages for his breakfast, run his errands, and on occasion black his boots, and that without the slightest injury to his rank or self-respect. And the aristocrat of to-day, on a big-game expedition, would do all this if occasion required with perfect gusto. We have only to spread this feeling and half the problem is solved. The body cries out for work just as much as the mind, the body of the millionaire as much as the body of the pauper. We have only to proclaim it dignified and it is so. What a new day for South Africa when the white man has become willing to show the native that superiority consists not so much in scorning to do work as in doing it well!

But while this is true it is not the less certain that the human movement is all in direction of substituting higher for lower forms of work. Manual labour, we have said, is both healthful and honourable, but it may be excessive. The tendency is to reduce it, to bring it into bounds, so that man may be easily master of his toil instead of being mastered by it. He is becoming more and more a director rather than a forth-putter of energy. Outside the

force stored in his muscles he discovers there is another force, of the same kind but measureless in quality, which waits to be employed. It is the force of the universe, the force of gravitation, of heat, of electricity, of winds and waves. Here is a servant who never tires, who never grumbles, who demands no wages, who asks only to have its ways understood, who discloses at every turn new and marvellous resources. With this spring of eternal energy behind there seems no end to the human possibilities. We are only at the beginning of the harnessing process. The powers as yet unused are enough of themselves to start the millennium. There is force sufficient in the tides alone to do all man's muscle work could he but hit on the way of using them. Enough has been done already to change all the conditions of labour. Our generation has seen the transformation of agriculture. The "labourer" is a watcher more than a labourer. He sees the machine do the reaping, the haymaking, the lifting, the threshing that were done aforetime by the swing of his own arms. And it is the same everywhere else. At the St. Gothard it was the diamond drill and the dynamite blast that pierced the mountain. On sea and on land our workers are steam and steel rather than nerve and muscle.

But here emerges the question that stirs to rage the proletariat and that confounds the reformer: "Why is it that the revolution accomplished by machinery has done so little for the worker himself? Why is it that with the magnificent victories achieved for the race by modern science—that with all our splendid progress—the condition of masses

of the people remains so hopeless ? Why is it that the intensity of the light in one direction is counter-balanced, as though automatically, by the depth of the shadow in another ? ” Here, indeed, is our sphinx-riddle, which we have to solve or perish.

We are ceasing to be satisfied with the stock answers offered by the political economy of a generation ago. There is, for instance, the amazing argument of Malthus, the more amazing that it has imposed on so many and such able men, that population, by its law of increase, is bound to overpass the means of subsistence and to reduce, consequently, the lowest class to starvation point. How utterly false is this calculation is now evident to every student, and yet it was accepted by Mill. It was about as reasonable as the argument that because a child doubles its weight in the first year, it will go on doubling its weight every year. The human race does not increase in any such ratio as was alleged. Moreover, it is not the size of a population which brings it into poverty. Quite otherwise. It was in 1727, when the population of Ireland was only two millions, that the terrible want and suffering made Dean Swift utter his bitter suggestion about roasting babies as the only famine remedy. On the other hand, it is seen in new countries, such as the United States and Canada, that it is not the increase of food that brings the increase of men, but the increase of men that brings the increase of food. Under proper conditions man can develop food resources far faster than he can use them. And the balance on his side in this matter tends to increase rather than diminish.

What, then, is the matter with us? Why the existing want and discontent? Why, at one end, workers without work, or without the due rewards of work, with, at the other, a swollen luxury and extravagance that are not less a curse? An answer which created a great sensation when it appeared, and which still justly commands attention, was that given by Henry George in his "Progress and Poverty," where he traced all our present evils to absolute ownership in land, and found a universal remedy in the abolition of that ownership. No one can read that book without being impressed with its lofty purpose, its array of facts, its solemn and prophetic earnestness. But it is not conclusive. The gaze of our reformer was directed so entirely to one point as to leave out essential features of the question and to distort his view of some things within his field of vision. His laboured contention that wages are paid out of labour rather than out of capital amounts really to nothing, since, according to his own showing, capital is simply accumulated labour. His argument, too, that increase of productive power tends always to the increase of rents and to the lowering of wages is disproved by the facts. If, as he says, high wages mean low rents and *vice versa*, we should have the lowest wages in London, where city rents are enormous, and the highest wages in the country, where rents are lower and lower. The reverse, we know, is the case. Were landowners the absorbents of all the increase of production and possessed of the omnipotence he speaks of as theirs, we should have the spectacle of everyone possessing capital rushing to invest it in

this wondrous commodity. As a matter of fact, people are to-day putting their money into anything rather than land.

Moreover the dragon of absolute private ownership in land against which Mr. George fights is a chimera. There has never been such a thing. In every form of government, ancient or modern, the State has been recognised as ultimate owner. In the Middle Ages the feudal tenure, with its claim of military service for the broad acres bestowed, was the fullest recognition of this fact. In the State of to-day that the community is final owner is evidenced by the power it claims of making land laws. It claims to give its own meaning to the term "owner," putting just as much or as little power into the word as it deems good for the individual and the State. That the mere holding of land by the community, which is our reformer's panacea, does not contain all the beneficial potency he imagines is shown amply enough, one would think, by the history of common ownership as seen in Russia, amongst the Indian tribes, and in other primitive communities.

The land question is a potent factor in the problem, but assuredly not the only one. It is not a land question which has produced the state of things at Chicago described in "The Jungle." What we see there is a mass of helpless people, Poles, Lithuanians, Sclavs, who, ignorant of the country they have come to, of its language, its laws, its customs, and driven by their daily necessity, are forced into the wealth-making machine, worked there to their utmost strength, and then, when energy fails, flung aside to make way for new-comers, hapless as themselves.

What is needed here, as all over the world, is plainly more than a settlement of land rents. The essential thing is the realisation by the State—the organised community, that is—of its supreme power, not only over land but over all other species of property, and of the intervention of the State to prevent the exploitation of the poor by unscrupulous private greed. Not until the State has asserted its supreme power ; not until the public conscience, guided by its best intellect, has transformed the idea of ownership, making it a trust subject to the interests of all, will humanity's day of deliverance have dawned.

XVII

Our Debt to Life

IN preceding chapters we have been discussing the forms of social improvement that are concerned with its external side. We cannot easily exaggerate the importance of that side. Property, ownership, labour and capital, the relation of the State to the individual—these are matters which affect us all at every point and at every moment. In this sense we may say with a French statesman, “Politics are our blood, our money, and our happiness.” The spirituality which ignores this realm, which remains ignorant of its laws and forces, is a false spirituality. The Kingdom of God amongst men is a kingdom which comprehends everything about men. While all this is true it is not the less certain that political and social readjustments are the vainest of imaginations if regarded as the only or chief factors of the human problem. Let us by all means try to get this part of our sum right. Bad calculation here, we recognise, muddles the entire equation. But our figuring on these lines is only the beginning of our bookkeeping. The greatest factor has yet to come in. Behind political economy comes character. Before we talk of Socialisms we must talk about the

Socialist. The State cannot make the individual. It is the individual who makes the State. And so we come back to the truth which Socrates taught over two thousand years ago, and on which Christianity has always insisted, that the true politics is first of all a politics of the soul, that all outer conditions depend finally on the inner conditions there.

The supreme want of our time is a spiritual teaching which, addressed with fearless impartiality to our upper, our middle, and our working classes, shall, with irrefutable argument and irresistible appeal, urge them to inner improvement as the indispensable accompaniment of any external advance. This teaching must be adapted to the new thought-conditions. It must, above all, be a teaching that shall capture the imagination of the young. One of the leading features of it should be the creation in their minds of an intense sense of social obligation. They should be taught to realise, as their great initial lesson, their debt to life. This, indeed, is the old evangelic doctrine of grace, presented in the form which the new generation can understand and appreciate. Put in the old theologic phraseology it would be to multitudes repugnant and meaningless. But there is a way of putting it which will make it plain enough and impressive enough to every youth and maiden of common understanding.

The doctrine to be taught, we say, is a doctrine of grace, and of a commensurate indebtedness. There is a huge account against us, which, if we possess a spark of honour, we shall want, as far as we can, to

repay. We are where we are and what we are because of boundless benefactions bestowed upon us by invisible donors, because of measureless service rendered us by invisible helpers. It would be the deathblow, one would think, both of cynicism and of pessimism, if people, instead of accepting what they possess to-day as a thing of course, would take the trouble to trace the process by which it has come to be theirs. We should see then, if we never saw it before, that a Cross is signed upon all things, that we live by a system of vicarious sacrifice. To begin close at hand, what a gospel, if only we would listen to it, is preached us by our breakfast-table! Almost everything there—the tea, the coffee, the bread, the sugar, the condiments—has come to us from overseas. For these things to reach us it required that a host of those bravest, simplest, and most enduring of our fellow-men, the merchant sailors, should watch and toil by day and night in hardest conditions, amid fogs and tempests, with smallest spiritual aid, with smallest chance of morality. How little we think of all that! How little is there in us of the mind of Quaker John Woolman, who, in his first voyage across the Atlantic, determined, well-to-do citizen that he was, to company with the sailors in the fore-castle, to share their life, that he might know at first-hand how they fared, and that also he might minister to them of his inner treasure! We, unregenerate that we are, take all from them without any feeling of the debt.

To come from visibles to invisibles, think of our present freedoms and how they have reached us!

We accept our liberty of speech and of action as a matter of course. One might suppose it was in the nature of things, as sunlight and fresh air. As a matter of fact, it was won for us by godlike heroism, by agony and bloody sweat. It came because men dared to say the thing they held to be true, though they saw the torture chamber and the scaffold as the certain result. We think of Bruno burning at the stake, of his fellow-countryman, Carnesecchi, tortured and executed, for saying his say in the face of Rome. Can you count it out in gold, or other value, my brother Protestant, what you and I owe to our own Ridley and Latimer, enduring the smoke and flame of that Oxford pyre? Think of Sebastian Franck giving up his easy ecclesiastical post and becoming a working soap-boiler at Erlangen in order that, with a free soul, he might testify against a religion of corruption and superstition, and for one that was inward, vital, and spiritual! What number of shekels or other coin will represent the obligation which Free Churchmen are under to "that obscure Baptist congregation" of the early seventeenth century, of whom David Masson writes: "It seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of liberty of conscience. . . . It was, in short, from this little dingy meeting-house somewhere in old London that there flashed out first in England the absolute doctrine of religious liberty." Free Churchmen meet peaceably for their worship to-day because their forefathers were not afraid to brave the possibility of having their gatherings broken up with pistol-shots and themselves haled to prison.

Not only our religious liberty but our religion itself is all a debt. We are here ministered to daily by invisible, unpaid helpers. From what distances, through what processes, does our inner sustenance reach us day by day! In Glasgow the maidservant who turns on the tap in the kitchen draws water which has flowed into the grimy city from Loch Katrine, that far-off lovely lake set in its circle of mighty hills. And when, before the turmoil of the day, in our secret place, we open on a book of devotion, and taste there some living word—it may be a passage from Augustine, or a page of the “Imitation,” or the message of prophet or apostle—is it not here again a matter of murky city and the highland springs? Only the matter goes deeper. Glasgow pays for its water. But as we taste our draught of inner refreshment what have we to offer in return to those far-off souls who, centuries ago, climbed the hills of God, who, high up there, struck the rock and caused to flow down upon us the living stream that we here drink of?

There seems only one appropriate answer to all this. Our past is a huge debt. The great spirits that have toiled and suffered for our enlargement seem from their height to contemplate us, waiting for our response. Behind them is a greater appeal still. It is that contained in the entire life process. We are the heirs of all the ages. For us through immeasurable æons Nature has carried on her patient work—upward, ever upward, from the unconscious to the conscious, from rock to plant, from plant to animal, from mollusc to man. And to-day her cry is still onward. She is adding to-day to the human

soul. The Divine inspiration known to prophet and evangelist is a fact of the present hour. The human consciousness is aware of a constant secret inflow from its upper side. It knows a Power that helps, that inspires, that will not let us go. It is as if a millionaire had invested his capital in us, had trusted us with his utmost wealth, and was looking patiently for a return.

All this, we say, leaves room for but one reply. Let the account be properly presented to the youth of our day and they will draw the inference themselves. Generous natures, as they come thoroughly to understand under what conditions, and at whose charges, they find themselves seated at the banquet of life, will feel the stir within them of a new mighty impulse. It will be too intolerable for them, a poltroonery not to be endured, to partake of this feast and to offer nothing in return. But their debt to the past, they will see, cannot be paid to the past. It can be paid only to the future. The boons they have received are to be passed on—with an increment supplied by themselves.

The other point here to be considered is the form which this offering shall take. And here the main thing to be taught is that being comes before doing, that the quality of service depends first of all on a quality of nature. "*Operari sequitur esse*"—"doing follows being, is according to being." Nothing is more striking in the world's annals than the sheer power of character, as in itself a benefaction apart from the special activities with which it has been connected. It reminds one of the description given by old Thorpe of Wycliffe. "Master John

Wycliffe was considered by many to be the most holy of all the men in his age. . . . He was absolutely blameless in his conduct. Wherefore very many of the chief men of this kingdom were devotedly attached to him, and kept a record of what he said, and guided themselves after his manner of life." In this way a great character is, by its sheer quality of being, rendering service at every moment, and for the most part unconsciously. It is in this respect like a mountain whose fine air we breathe, whose beauty and far-reaching prospects we enjoy, though it knows us not.

It is this consideration above all others that those entrusted with the spiritual guidance of the nation need most to remember. A clergyman of the old school once remarked to the present writer that he did not see why the clergy should be called on for a higher morality than the laity. "Only," was the reply we ventured, "that the laity regard morals as "the clergyman's business." When the religious teacher seeks an excuse for lowering his own standard, society is in evil case. On the other hand, a purified soul acts on the community with a unique power of its own. Such men find their simplest word backed by mysterious forces which compel the minds of men. So different their eloquence from that of the mere rhetorician! Goethe understood this. Says Wagner in "Faust":

ich hab' es öfters ruhm'n hören,
Ein Komödiant könnt einen Pfarrer lehren.

Faust: Ja, wenn der Pfarrer ein Komödiant ist.

"I have often heard it said that the actor has

much to teach the clergyman." "Yes, when the clergyman is just an actor."

But this rule, of character first and performance after, applies not to one form of service only. It is the rule in all. What every department of life is calling for to-day—commerce, politics, the arts and literature—is lofty and firmly-rooted individual principle. When that decays we are lost. As John Morley has put it: "The immediate cause of the decline of a society in order of morals is a decline in the quantity of its conscience, a deadening of its moral sensitiveness." But how is this "moral sensitiveness" to be procured and sustained? It is on this question that every scheme for running the State by politics only, for creating its well-being by mere socialisms and property redistributions, splits as on a sunken rock. When we have reached the ultimate here we find we are only at the beginning. The healthy State is made up of good citizens. There is no other way of producing it. But the good man, the good citizen, is made only in one way. By whatever road we travel in these investigations, we come round to the same truth: "The soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." The laws of the spiritual life are the only laws of the nation's life. Our supreme duty, then, to the present and the future is to train our young to the full sense, first, of their indebtedness to life, and, second, to the conviction that the only way of discharging it is by being and doing the highest that they know.

XVIII

The Doctrine of Limit

THE idea of the limit, as a fundamental principle both of life and of thought, was a favourite and much-used doctrine of Aristotle. You could not have, he argues, a boat of either an inch or a mile in length. At both ends, of smallness and of greatness, the being and the uses of the vessel demand a limit. Starting with this, he carries the principle into many departments of affairs. It crops up repeatedly in his treatment of politics, of philosophy and religion. And it occurs to us that in manifold questions of our own time, affecting all these spheres, this Greek idea needs to be remembered. In some of these matters we have been forgetting it, to our hurt. The applications of the doctrine are multitudinous, and we can only select a few. We may begin with the lower and more obvious as an introduction to others whose reach is further towards the central mysteries.

Let us start with a civic question. The Greeks had a doctrine of the city or community which is well worth our consideration just now. Believing that man was essentially "a political being," that his life realised itself completely only in the social

system, they held that this realisation demanded as one of its conditions the application of their "limit" doctrine. The State, which to them was commonly a city, must be of a certain size. Plato is more insistent on this than his successor. His ideal republic must keep itself within bounds, both as to population and other matters. When the numbers reached a certain point there must be, as with bees, a swarming off and the founding of a new colony. The idea was that the fellowship—for the State was a fellowship—must not be so large as to prevent the supervision and management necessary to the highest communal life. This view has had no good fortune so far. Alexander broke it down for the Greeks by the creation of an enormous empire, an example in which he was speedily followed by the Romans. How far we are from it to-day is too evident. Our idea of greatness is size. Nations compete for the biggest mileage and the hugest population. It is the same with the cities. London boasts her six millions, and New York and Chicago strain every nerve to come up with her. And so these huge amorphous wens grow perpetually, eating more and more of the green fields, and diminishing in the same ratio the portion of fresh air to each human lung inside them. In this swarm the individual counts for less and less. In a village we know the shoemaker and his neighbour the tailor. They have room enough to cultivate an individuality, in which all the rest of us take a friendly interest. In London ten thousand of us might disappear to-morrow, and the human tide would roll on as before. Increasingly clear

does it become that if we are to secure the best ends of the common life we shall have to revise, and in the Greek direction, our whole doctrine of the city. We shall seek its greatness elsewhere than in mere aggregation.

Another side of the Greek doctrine, not less suggestive for our day, was its application to wealth. Neither Plato nor Aristotle believed in millionaires. Their philosophy of life, both individual and social, was dead against this particular phenomenon. And while their economic theories were in some respects naïve—as, for instance, in their view of interest—their general position on this subject was, it has to be confessed, vastly higher than our own. It was their virtue in these matters to look steadily to the end. How to achieve the fullest, highest life, in a man's own nature and in all that the community could offer him—this was the question they incessantly asked themselves. Mere money-spinning, where it absorbed a man's whole time, was, in this view, worse than a waste. The man ought rather to be spinning *himself*, developing on all sides his capacity and stature of being. And that too, surely, is a doctrine for us. Modern society, in its rage for mere accumulation, is forgetting the alphabet of the great living. It substitutes the size of its money-bag for the size of its own soul. Quaker John Woolman, to mention him again, who gave up half his business and half his income in middle life, alleging as his reasons that he did not wish his sons, through beginning too rich, to miss the bracing of life's struggle, and also that he wished himself to give more time to the

personal service of God and his neighbour, lifted our doctrine of limit here surely to its highest point—the point where it stands not as of Aristotle, but as of the mind and spirit of Jesus.

One could add indefinitely to these applications, but there is another side of the theme which opens on another and deeper line of thinking. The old doctrine of limit was intimately connected with a doctrine of ends. The Greeks had no difficulty about final causes. Just as a boat was made of a given size and shape to serve the purpose of its builder, so our life in its orderings and limitations showed in like manner the evidence of purpose. We know how that view has been assailed in our time by a certain school of scientific thinkers. But let us consider the matter a little.

A fresh mind, untrammelled by the schools, fixing its attention on the facts of life, would be struck probably by nothing so much as by the singular limits of man and his world. That man should be so much and no more ; that he, who can calculate in centuries and æons, should himself have some three or four score years for his time-portion ; that, carrying in him a concept of infinite space, he should himself occupy some six feet or less of it ; that he, so limitless on one side, should be so exactly bounded on the other, is surely a first-class puzzle to begin with. Consider, further, man's environment. He is in a universe of gigantic forces, compared with which his own resisting power is as that of a snail under a Nasmyth hammer. In earthquakes and volcanoes and whirlwinds he gets hints of the sort of world he is in. The sun

that warms him is a fiery furnace thousands of times hotter than anything he knows on this planet. The smallest as well as the largest things show on occasion this incredible and destructive energy. The molecules in a Crookes tube rush with a velocity that would melt any metal by their sheer impact. Yet these giant powers, in their normal action upon man, are held in what seems a marvellously calculated limit. They work at highest pressure outside, as in the stupendous energy which hurls us round the sun or projects us, with the whole planetary system, on that other journey we are making through space. But the forces that directly touch our life are all tempered. The sun's heat, the winter's cold, the sweep of winds, the flow and ebb of tides, the fall of rain, have all their limits. A little more on this side or that and we were burned, or frozen, or drowned. Meanwhile through all the ages of man's history the balance has been maintained, and the miracle of life has gone on.

Naturalism of the Haeckel type finds in all this nothing but the outcome of a material necessity, the action of primordial forces which worked this way because they could work in no other. Man is here not as the child of purpose but because he is the kind of being that evolution would naturally produce, and whose nature harmonises with his environment. But this school of thinking is rapidly being found out. The footrule it uses is discovered to be ludicrously short for the measurement of the universe we are in. As an eminent scientist himself puts it: "Science can only indicate the path which leads to territories beyond her own,

ruled by other laws than those to which her realm is subject." Our doctrine of limit receives here, in fact, one of its most interesting applications. For, as the best minds now perceive, there is nothing so strictly bound and fettered as science, considered as an interpreter of life. Its verdicts deal only with one world, the world of appearance, and appearance at best is merely the vestibule of reality. Its calculations are good up to a certain point—and then they break down hopelessly. To give an instance. Science deals with the realm of matter and force, a realm which in all its parts is conditioned by time and space. It reasons always in terms of time and space—in terms, that is, of succession and of magnitude. But when we question it about these terms it is immediately landed in hopeless contradictions. On its own plane of reasoning we can prove it equally impossible that the cosmos could have had a beginning, or that it could *not* have had a beginning; and that the visible universe has a limit, or that it has *no* limit. There are many similar dilemmas known to philosophy, and the sum of them combines to make abundantly clear the sharply-marked boundary where the mechanical theory ends, leaving us with the mystery of reality all unsolved.

And it is just where that world of appearance ends that religion begins. In every age, in its most naïve as well as in its highest manifestations, religion has always stood for a world beyond the visible, a world that transcends the mere plus and minus verdicts; a world not so much seen by the intellect as felt by the heart; a world which takes

matter and its manifestations as a secondary affair ; a world which finds its life not in ponderable masses, but in will and purpose, and moral values, and spiritual affinities. The further science advances the more clearly does it show the necessity and the function of faith. That the sense by which we perceive a spiritual world is trustworthy is shown by its persistence, and by the place it takes in our scale of moral values. As Lecky puts it : " That the religious instincts are as truly a part of our nature as are our appetites and our nerves is a fact which all history establishes, and which forms one of the strongest [proofs of the reality of that unseen world to which the soul of man continually tends."

And here it is well we should understand the essential difference between theology and religion. Theology is all for definitions, for boundary lines, for exact expressions, whereas it is the essence of religion that it is free, unlimited, and undefined. It is not properly seizable by the intellect, and it is by a sheer impertinence that age after age the theologians have presented their lucubrations as the final word upon it. Heavens ! What do these people take themselves for, with their tin-pot systems, proclaimed as ultimate, panoplied in anathemas, yet in dismal succession superseded one after another by the sheer growth of the soul ! It is part of the transcendence of Jesus that, putting aside the theology of His day, He spoke to humanity in words and in a tone that its heart at once recognised as from the source of its own deepest aspiration.

It is the wonder of our life that we belong to the limited and to the unlimited. The wise man is he who takes full account of both, who knows how, at all points, to qualify the one by the other. In doing this he will put always the emphasis on what is biggest in him. Against the littleness of his knowledge he will put the depth and range of his soul's feeling ; against the brevity of his mortal life that he has felt eternity ; against the hard limitations of his earthly lot the measureless range of his spiritual kingdom. Lamennais, in one of his passionate utterances, declares it to be man's misery that he is torn asunder by the two worlds to which he belongs. Rather say we, that herein lies his supreme dignity, and the road to his final joy.

XIX

Of False Independence

WHEN Burns sang the joy "of being independent" he set vibrating one of the inmost chords of his countrymen and of the entire Anglo-Saxon race. This passion for independence is writ over our whole history. It crops out in a multitude of aphorisms, composed by us or about us. We say "the Englishman's house is his castle." The French say of us "not only is England an island, but every Englishman is an island." It is this passion which made England Protestant; which split its religion into a multitude of sects; which in the seventeenth century pulled down the monarchy; which in the eighteenth century created the democratic United States; which has produced the freest literature and the freest institutions the world possesses. The man we most respect is the one who stands upright on his feet, four-square to all the winds that blow, "lord of himself though not of lands," as Sir Henry Wotton has it. The race is continually producing men who carry the principle to all lengths—a George Fox, in his suit of leather; a Walt Whitman, in his boathouse; a Thoreau, of whom Emerson says, "He never married; he

lived alone ; he never went to church ; he never voted ; he refused to pay a tax to the State ; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine. . . . He chose to be the bachelor of thought and nature.”

The quality in itself is assuredly a great one and worthy all our respect. That it has accomplished such things in the world and produced such characters is, on that head, argument enough. One traces, indeed, in the actual present a certain declinature from the old ideals which may well cause misgiving. For every man who to-day stands upright and pushes forward there seem half a dozen who are leaning against the wall. Some of the iron has gone out of our blood. The sturdiness of the father is not repeated in the son. Instead of emulating the force which carried the elder through the rough and tumble of circumstance to his present height, the younger too often is content to link himself on to the parental energy, as a car to the engine, and to be carried along as mere luggage. We could do with a revival of the earlier independence. This high respect for one's own body and soul, as ours to make the best of ; this trust in our own faculty, as worth something ; this brave measuring of ourselves against the universe, and joyous use of our tools upon its possibilities ; this preference of our own earned bread, however plain or scanty, to the dole of another—we cannot have too much of this, in England or out of it.

What we propose here to deal with is a quite different independence, a false or bastard species which men are trying at in various spheres, and always with bad results. The error is one not so much of

personal character as of policies, and tendencies and modes of thinking. It is, in fact, whenever it exhibits itself, a kind of ignorance, an attempt at the impossible, a running one's head against the world's adamant laws. Yet we have the spirit at work to-day over the whole field of life—in religion, in morality, in politics, and in commerce. In every instance, as we shall see, it is an attempt at ignoring the cosmic unity; a shutting off of one sphere from communication with all others, as though one part of our universe could ever be disjoined from any and every other part. It is astonishing with what persistence men continue to act on this assumption, in face of the flat denial of it which nature invariably gives.

That this notion of the watertight compartment in thought and conduct obtains so largely is not surprising when we remember that it is only in our generation that the idea of the essential unity of things has begun to dawn on the world. It is our day that has discovered how everything changes into everything else; how electricity, heat, light, motion are modes of one force; how the very atom, regarded hitherto as the fixed point in physics, is really transmutable. It is our day which has found out the oneness of all substance; how the materials of our planet are in the sun and in Sirius; how all the universe is in touch; how the faintest impact on the luminiferous ether that fills space causes a tremor which is felt on the surface of countless worlds. And it is our day which has struck on the fact of the interpenetration of all laws; that there cannot be a discovery in chemistry or biology which

will not affect the entire realm of thinking, and this because the whole realm of life—physical, mental, moral, and spiritual—is one. What the early world caught a glimpse of in its “*omnia tendunt ad unum*” is the demonstration of to-day. We know that all is in one, and one in the all.

But while science and philosophy have together reached this height, our commoner thinkings and actings are a long way below it. On these levels men build their walls as though nothing had happened higher up. To begin with one of the more palpable illustrations. The larger half of society is pursuing its schemes, contrivings, and general manner of living on the supposition that one social level can be independent of all the others. What has Kensington to do with Poplar, the West End with the slum? Why should Midas in his palace trouble about Tom-all-alone in his cellar? Only that, as Dickens put it, “there is not an atom of Tom’s slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him but shall work its retribution”—upon Midas and all the class he represents. Carlyle in “Past and Present” tells the story of an Irish widow who, her husband having died in Edinburgh, went forth with her three children, bare of all resource, to seek help from the charitable establishments of that city. They all denied her, until, her strength failing, she sank and died of typhus fever. But some seventeen other people having caught the infection died also. Upon which our philosopher thus comments: “The forlorn Irish widow applies to her fellow-creatures. ‘Behold I am sinking,

bare of help. I am your sister ; one God made us. Ye must help me ! ' They answer, ' No, impossible ; thou art no sister of ours.' But she proves her sisterhood ; her typhus fever kills *them* ; they actually were her brothers though denying it." It does not say much for our progress in what we may call social common-sense, to say nothing of its higher moralities, that it takes typhus and cholera to teach us its first principles. When we assert our social independence ; when we deny that brotherhood of man which Christianity proclaims, plague and fever become our theologians, and drive the truth home.

" Become our theologians " ! This reminds us of another sphere in which a false independence has wrought and is still working grievous damage. Plague and fever are not prepossessing as professors of theology, but they have at least this to recommend them, that they are always in strict accordance with the facts. Their first principle is the essential unity of the universe, which they will prove, if necessary, by Irish widows or other equally cogent demonstrations. They are entirely up to date and in complete harmony with all other truth that is to be had. But who shall say that the theology of the schools has attained to any such position ? Much of it hangs now in mid-air, unpropped, unsupported. The Roman syllabus of 1864 was a theologic anathema against modern science as an enemy of the Church and God. And in present-day Protestantism there are writers and preachers of considerable vogue who teach doctrines formulated centuries ago, as though nothing had

been discovered since. They would be shocked to hear that their sons at school, or college, were being taught the geology, the geography, the chemistry, the biology of the sixteenth century. But they teach the theology of that period, as though the progress in these other departments meant no difference to this. This is an independence which the nature of things will not suffer. For there is no discovery in science which does not inevitably react on dogma. The Copernican astronomy put out of court a whole world of patristic and mediæval ideas. Modern geology gave us an entirely new reading of Genesis. Comparative religion has altered all our conceptions of outside faiths and their relation to Christianity. Ecclesiastical Protectionism may build its walls heaven-high round the theologic domain. They do not avail, for the Cosmos is a confirmed free trader in ideas. Nothing can prevent their circulation and interpenetration.

While ecclesiasticism has, to its hurt, been indulging in these confusions, it is curious to note how a precisely similar blunder is being made in an opposite quarter of thought. Laborious efforts are just now being put forth to construct what is called "an independent morality"—an ethic, that is, which is to be quite free from the religious influence and the religious sanction. There are, we are assured, materials for an excellent secularist moral, with no thanks to the Church. Evolution is to give us all we want. It does not seem to occur to theorists of this order to ask how evolution, in this sphere, has actually worked, and the part which the religious

instinct has played in it. No first-class thinker has ventured to leave its influence out of his calculation. When Kant, in his "Critique of the Pure Reason," showed how it was impossible to demonstrate God, Freedom, and Immortality by the intellect alone, he found them all in the deeper reason of the soul which is beyond logic. And the general voice of humanity confirms that verdict. Hegel is stating the simple fact when he declares that "all the various peoples feel that it is in the religious consciousness they possess truth, and they have always regarded religion as constituting their true dignity, and the Sabbath of their soul." Everywhere the healthy growth of the religious instinct has meant the rehabilitation of morals. Everywhere the decay of the one has been the decay of the other. When Voltaire's friends were one day arguing against the existence of God and a future life, he ordered his servants out of the room. When asked why, he replied, "Gentlemen, I do not want to have my throat cut." He had taken a true measure of the situation.

But this is not the only direction in which a false independence has been sought in the sphere of morals. The religionist, as well as the outsider, has tried his evasions. Religions of ceremonial, religions of enthusiasm, religions of credal shibboleths have, age after age, been set up as substitutes for the moral law. It is curious to watch these naïve attempts to hoodwink the Almighty, as though He did not know His business. The attempts all break down. The cosmos will have nothing to do with them, and for the reason that it is built and

everlastingly sustained on the silent, irresistible, irreversible ethical laws. Thus is it that slaveries, political corruptions, business iniquities, whatever the religious pretensions of their backers and abettors, spell bankruptcy in the end. The sum will not work out right. All the rules are against them. It is because the rule of three, the moral principle and the religious instinct, in fine the entire cosmic machinery, are in accord, are parts of one whole, that roguery, in the Church or out of it, comes to its inevitable crash in the end.

Plainly there is no such thing as independence for us. The quality we eulogised at the beginning is misnamed. The fighters for liberty, the men who respect themselves, who hold their own in the battle of circumstance, are what they are, not by aloofness and insulation, but by alliance with the world's facts and laws, by a reasoned and complete dependence. It is in union we find our strength. Nine-tenths of ourselves is outside ourselves. It is in our superb faculty of alliance that we discover the possibilities of life. We are then ourselves plus the universe. The true man is a focal point where everything meets. He knows himself one with God, with his fellow, with every force that energises in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

The Undefined Moralities

NOT the least of the difficulties with which the hard-pressed modern spirit is beset lies in the fact that it has, from day to day, to construct its own morality. We are only at the beginning of ethics. Our Bibles, prayer-books, and other spiritual directories grew up in times so much younger than ours. In them we find eternal principles, but a mighty paucity of application. The soul of man to-day finds itself embarrassed by its growth. Its height enables it to look over walls which shut in the prospect for our fathers; and that prospect for the present is somewhat bewildering. It is largely over an untrod region where we have to make our own roads. Our age is, of course, not unique in this respect. Every generation has had to provide its own supplement to the Ten Commandments. In many instances, indeed, the supplement has been too voluminous a production. Catholicism in particular has seized upon this sphere of "the undefined moralities" to erect in it the chief strongholds of its sway. It offers itself as above all things a director of consciences. In the vast and sinister elaborations of the Jesuit casuistry, in

the formidable tomes of a Bellarmine, a Dens, and a Liguori it seeks to survey and authoritatively pronounce upon the whole area of human conduct. Anglicanism has followed somewhat haltingly in the same track. Jeremy Taylor, in his "Ductor Dubitantium," discusses, with his ingenious learning, an enormous number of moral situations. And in his confessional-box the new-style Anglican priest offers himself as the authorised solver of his parishioners' ethical problems.

Our age does not, however, as to its general movement, show signs of going back to this kind of solution. It has too palpably outgrown it. The ecclesiastical answer is, it finds, too often no answer. Circumstance teaches it better than the priest. It perceives that the very difficulties on its road, imposing, as they do, the necessity of alert and unsleeping vigilance, form one of the chief factors of the soul's education. Our business here plainly is not so much to reach our Canaan by a short cut as to wander awhile in the wilderness and become strong by our wandering. The fight of the individual with his special difficulties is his athletic exercise. His very blunders help to form him. As Vauvenargues puts it: "Who wishes to form himself on the grand scale ought to risk making mistakes, and not to allow himself to be beaten down by them."

The position of the modern man—where he is in possession of his own conscience—is then, we say, that of a traveller in an unexplored country. He has to find his way. He looks up from his Bible, his books of religious direction, to find himself confronted with questions about which they are

silent. The region here is a vast one, and we can do no more than glance down one or two of the directions along which it stretches. The undefined moralities are at once public and private. They belong to our action as fellow-citizens in the commonwealth, and also to the daily, intimate habitudes of our separate life.

To take an illustration of the former kind ; in what an extraordinary tangle do we find ourselves on the subject of international ethics ! The topic here, indeed, offers us an admirable example of the development of morality, of the way the human spirit, moved by the inner forces which govern it, reaches out to higher and ever higher solutions. In the old days the modern difficulty had not even arisen. The question was so easy ! Patriotism was love of your country and hatred of the outsider. "Love your friend and hate your enemy." The Greek called the foreigner a barbarian, and was prepared at every opportunity to make war upon and enslave him. The Jew would die for Jerusalem, but thought it a religious duty, when occasion offered, to lay waste Moab and Edom. It is actually only within our own lifetime that international ethics have come up as a matter for the general conscience. It is only now that we are waking up to the singular conditions that prevail there ; that we are conscious of the extraordinary anomaly of statesmen following one scale of morality for their private life and an entirely different one for the conduct of "foreign affairs." It is only now that men begin to ask why faith, generosity, and the Christian law of loving-kindness should be

recognised in our family and social dealings, while mistrust, cunning, and undisguised self-interest should be the recognised motives in the intercourse of States.

We can easily test the new moral growth in this sphere by comparing our present standpoint with a not at all remote past. It is, for instance, inexplicable to us how England could have forced the American Colonies into separation under conditions of ill-feeling and of bloodshed; how, as has been said, "Lord North could have lost America for £16,000 a year revenue!" It is not simply the crass stupidity of the thing that amazes us; it is the want of moral perception which prevented men from seeing the impossibility of governing a high-spirited, independent people by mere force and violence. Such a thing simply could not happen now; it could not happen in our relations with Canada or Australia. And yet England and its Government had in 1775 the same published moral codes and sanctions—Bibles, prayer-books, and what not—as we now possess. It is the "undefined moralities" that have been moving, the new code of the human spirit. Look also at the feeling of to-day with regard to war. Here again the authorised moral standards are where they were; but man is not what he was. It was the particular height and colour of his thought in the past that stocked the world with arsenals and made it glitter with bayonets. But a thought of another height and colour is now here, pushing out the old. And this one will fill the world with something quite other than bayonet and arsenal.

When, from public affairs, we come to life's more private and intimate side we discover how here also we are constantly moving in the region of the morally undefined. In the most important concerns we have no published code or scale of values. We act by that secret instinct whose working reveals the height and complexion of our spirit. And here what curious varieties we find ! Where, for instance, in our standard ethics have we a proper appraisalment of cheerfulness ? There are multitudes of excellent people, with consciences that quiver to the slightest monitions of law and religion, but who lower the value of life to all around them by their incessant gloom. Is not this a kind of villainy ? What if a man tells me the truth and pays me twenty shillings in the pound ? Is that enough ? Is not his lugubrious countenance a species of robbery ? Ought it not to be an indictable offence to lower the common joy of living by inflicting our dismal moods upon the world ? Hazlitt thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. Says Stevenson with entire truth, "A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note . . . they practically demonstrate the Great Theorem of the liveableness of life." Hear Emerson also on this theme : "There is one topic peremptorily forbid to all well-bred, to all rational mortals, viz., their distempers. If you have not slept, or if you have headache or sciatica or leprosy or thunder-stroke, I beseech you by all angels to hold your peace, and not pollute the morning, to which all housemates bring serene and pleasant thoughts, by corruption and groans." Is there,

indeed, a more frontal virtue than this of good cheer? And yet so ethically confused are we that tender consciences by the score around us, the highest product of church and chapel, are not aware apparently that it *is* a virtue! They plod through the commandments and rob you daily of your sunshine! They would be horrified at the theft of a penny, while they filch from their neighbours what is worth more than a million pennies—the chance of being happy!

What a moral complex, too, is that presented by the daily clash of duties! How much time and strength shall we give to our private business, and how much to the public? It is in proportion as a man's influence widens that he finds the ever-increasing pressure of this difficulty. The successful pastor is called in a myriad directions outside his own special sphere. How these invitations appeal to him! What want of workers, leaders in that outer field! What reproaches of good men if he turn from it! But from the other side, from the home work which awaits his hand, what reproaches again wait upon neglect! Who shall draw his boundary-line? There is none can draw it but himself. Most curious also is it, tragically pathetic, indeed, at times, to note how men have gained their moral predominance in one department of life by the moral sacrifice of another. Wesley is incomparable as evangelist and religious leader. He could not be cited as a model husband. And speaking of Wesley, have we noticed that strange piece of undefined ethic which arises on the question of his relation to authority? He himself finds no way of

carrying out his mission but by disobeying the bishops and breaking the rules of his Church. From his own followers, on the contrary, he requires a strict obedience. "Do not seek to mend our rules, but keep them." The man whose whole strength lay in a daring personal initiative desires as the very last thing to see that character reproduced in his converts. The ecclesiastical rebel finds the severest and best-obeyed ecclesiastical rule of modern times. 'Tis an illustration of the maxim, familiar to the student of history, but not found in the text-books, that the morality which makes a great leader is something quite other than that which makes a good follower.

It were indeed an almost endless task barely to enumerate the moral dilemmas of our time. We are not sure about the ethics of eating. A bill of fare is a problem to the conscience. Who shall tell us how much time we should give to work and how much to recreation? Was that old Greek adage justified, that "Zeus frowns upon the overbusy"? Should we strive for the greatest possible output of our zeal and energy, or seek instead to improve its quality? Were it better if we had done "a hundred times as little, and that little a hundred times as well"? May we share in Schiller's aspiration to live "in the full enjoyment of my spirit," or forget all that in soul-engrossing activities? Have we balanced the claims of giving *versus* saving, of generosity *versus* prudence? To what extent shall a public teacher say out what he thinks and knows? What economies of utterance shall he practise, out of regard for weak brethren and wavering faith?

Woman, too ; how shall she carry herself in the new world that is here ? Shall she cultivate the modesties and repressions of the Victorian ideal, or strike in with the assertiveness, independence, and free expression of this later time ?

The problems are plainly endless, and they beset us every day. And the higher we rise the more they press. The fact that we have upon our hands so vast a range of them unknown to our fathers is, as we have said, evidence of the constant growth that is going on in humanity. The old text-books no longer suffice. We are being taken out of them to something higher and surer, to that constant revelation which is being communicated to earnest and receptive souls. The problems are an education, and as we face them we are conscious of a Teacher. God has not finished His Bible. He writes its new chapters daily upon our hearts. With "*Nil sine Deo*" as our motto we move surely and serenely on the untrod way. Its turns are baffling ; the cloud is often on the landscape ; but the road leads ever upwards.

Part III

PERSONAL

XXI

The Gift of a Day

WE all of us awoke this morning and began a new day. A commonplace affair enough, the repetition of a thousand similar awakenings. But the wonder here is that we do not see the wonder of what we have done. What are all the miracle-stories of folklore or religion in comparison with the marvel of opening our eyes upon such a world as this? It is only at by-moments we taste the strangeness—shall we say the weirdness?—of the thing. We catch it sometimes when, half awake, we find ourselves asking which is the reality—the dreamland we have left or this we are come into? Antecedent calculation would put the chances at millions to one against there being such a universe as the one we are in and such beings as we are. That we actually are, and where we are, makes anything else so easily possible. Future existence! That surely is the simplest affair compared with the *a priori* improbability of our *present* existence.

Consider the consciousness we wake into. It is the ultimate fact, the one thing we know, and yet the one we are utterly unable to explain. How matter and force, how nerve and blood corpuscle can

turn into love or logic is an unsolved riddle. Our mind informs us of an outside world about which we are perpetually talking. But of our real relation to it we know nothing. So far as we can make out there would be no outside world without our consciousness, or the consciousness of someone else. Antarctic explorers have recently brought news of a range of mountains down there as high as Mont Blanc. But could these mountains exist of themselves? Could there be such a thing as their height apart from a mind that calculates height, or their whiteness without an eye that knows colour, or their cold without a soul that knows sensation? This is the realm of puzzlement we find ourselves plunged into afresh every morning.

We emerge upon our day out of sleep. We went to bed last night probably without thinking of the greatness of the adventure. For there we took leave of ourselves, and laid down our lives. So far as our personality is concerned we die every twenty-four hours. Our body becomes inert, our reason fails, our will ceases; we are, through the darkness, the playground of unknown powers. These have their own way with us; let us be thankful it is mostly a kindly way. Sir Thomas Browne in his "Religio Medici" thanks God "for his happy dreams," and so should we all. May we not call them a valuable part of life's assets? Some of us have reached there our highest moments. These unknown dream-powers work for us. We remember Stevenson's "brownies"; how, as he slept, they gave him plots of stories and constructed whole chapters. Meanwhile our main life has gone under

—where we know not, only that it is clean away from our guidance and cognisance. But this morning, after the night's oblivion, it came back to us—not at our call, mark you, but by the working of its own occult machinery—came back with all its elements of sensation, memory, will, desire, linking us once more to the working universe and to all our yesterdays. With this miracle our day begins. Observe now what it offers us.

It takes perhaps a ripened age and an experienced spirit to appraise a day at its proper valuation. *Si jeunesse savait!* But youth does not know. Heedless, and with a wealth of years in store, it rattles the time-coinage in its pocket, and is careless of sixpences. But the elders, whose years are numbered, become greedy of time. "Our blessings brighten as they take their flight." Every day counts; its passage is a felt diminution. But to a healthy nature that is only one side of the reckoning. To such the new morning is not only a treasured portion of a swiftly dwindling store; it is not only a miracle; it is also a sacrament. For here once more, out of the infinite, there has been handed over to us a priceless gift, which we could not claim, and which we are powerless of ourselves to produce. The gates swing open each morning and we are ushered into the spacious domain of our thought and feeling, of our possessions and activities. "Here is your paradise; enter, enjoy, achieve!" As we muse on this we realise, as Schleiermacher taught the mocking Germans of his generation, how the only sane attitude to life is the religious attitude, how only in this way can we properly

adjust ourselves to a cosmos whose scheme from end to end is one of pure, unmerited grace, of a boundless giving. That one could take such a gift as this without acknowledgment, without the devotion of his powers to the Giver, were a meanness against which the stones should cry out.

There comes here, of course, the inevitable question—It is shouted at us from a thousand throats—“is there not another side to all this? What of the multitudes who open their eyes day by day upon nothing but dreariness; upon the deadly monotonous round of cheap labour; upon a hopeless, ill-paid servitude? What you are here celebrating is the day of the well-to-do; of the Sir Thomas Brownes, of the man with a thousand a year. Let him rejoice in his luck. He ought to. With a pound a week how different the story!” And truly there is ground enough for the criticism. God forbid we should allow our personal gratitude to degenerate into a complacent acceptance of things as they are. Can I be satisfied with being up while my brother is down? A curse on optimism if it means content with a system which keeps any mortal of us out of his sunshine! A Christian soul is bound by its very contract to agitate till every human being has room enough for his proper expansion, opportunity for taking his fill of life.

But let us make no mistake on the other side. We still believe in “the gift of a day.” Taking things as they are, we say, with Renan, that, properly managed, they yield everywhere their surplus of happiness. As to poverty, people too often call themselves poor because they have not taken the

trouble to reckon up their estate. They do not see the way riches are distributed. Mr. Carnegie the other day was offering millions for another clear ten years. The young fellow on the street there has a clear forty of them in his blood and bones. Would you take fifty thousand for your eyes? Is there a man living fool enough to exchange his health for five thousand a year and perpetual rheumatism? Can you then call yourself poor when you are carrying about with you over fifty thousand pounds' worth of vision-power and of clean-limbedness? When it is a question of life versus figures we are all such poor hands at reckoning. John Wesley in his "Journal" tells of one of his preachers who died leaving for fortune one and fourpence in cash. But his theme had been perpetually of the love of God, and his last words were of his joyous confidence in that love. Wesley did not count his preacher to be at all poor, nor do we.

Bad social arrangements may do much to spoil life, but at the worst they are a long way from spoiling it altogether. The capitalists, as Thoreau said, "cannot cut down the clouds." No, nor can they bottle the sunshine, nor stay the march of spring. It does not require an income of four figures to share Milton's rapture. Are we not with him when he says: "In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth"? And when you are shut indoors, plying maybe for wage a monotonous task, the task has not got the whole of you. The

cosmos has not given you away to that extent. It has secured you immense reserves of life which none can invade. The more routine your task, the more your thoughts are your own. And thoughts are often at their best and happiest when one is driving a nail or watching a loom. You are a thousand things, remember, beside an *employé*. You participate in all that is human. You are on the tide of the common progress. You behold every year the march of the seasons, the incomparable beauty of the heavens and the earth. You may be student, comrade, lover, parent. You are in a spiritual kingdom, working out a character, a personality. You are a partaker of God's grace, of all He is and is doing for humanity.

Whatever the situation, our happiness to-day is to so enormous an extent in our own hands. A man is happy when he thinks he is. And why should I not this morning think so? Why should I be gloomy when I can be glad? Here inside me is a force that can drive away the clouds. Our will power, which can call up good thoughts and disperse bad ones; which can concentrate on "the lighted side of things"; which can fall back on gracious memories as a refuge from present evils; which, in a word, can make its own weather, winning through thickest clouds to the blue sky and shining sun—our will power, we say, if we will only use it, is our philosopher's stone, that turns all things into gold. The more we give it to do the better it works. Adversity braces it as the Styx hardened Achilles.

The will, in a religious soul, regards each day as a pure gift, to be made the best of. Its outer rough-

ness only hides the treasures that are in it. The jewel often enough is cased in uncouthest packings. Our problem is each morning to find that jewel. We are bunglers if we miss it, if we miss our happiness. Happiness, we say, for that is what the day should bring us. That the soul was meant for joy is shown by its instinct for it, an instinct which the New Testament takes for granted and seeks always to develop. Gloom—*tristitia*—even in the monkish morality, was regarded as of the nature of mortal sin. Jean Paul is in the full Christian tradition when he exclaims, "Be every minute, man, a full life to thee! Enjoy thy existence more than thy manner of existence, and let the dearest object of thy consciousness be this consciousness itself." There is a false philosophy, followed by many, which postpones all this to the future. Such look from a sordid present to the better beyond. Their heaven is to-morrow. They do not reflect that their future is always no more than a coming present, and that if they cannot achieve something with "now" they will achieve nothing at all. To-day, if ever, God is Perfect Love, and we can live in that and have it live in us. A wondrous word for us here is that of Dr. Donne, as reported by Izaak Walton, "Blessed be God that He is God, only and divinely like Himself."

To-day is given us not only for enjoyment but for progress. The true happiness is no idle passivity. It is a movement towards higher things. As time passes a disciplined nature becomes more and more jealous of the hours. To-day must yield its fruitage, for it will never come again. It is this consideration which makes one astonished at the methods of

so-called "Society," which seem nothing more than an elaborate arrangement for the wasting of time. Think of men and women spending their days and nights in playing bridge—in a universe where there is everything to learn and everything to be done! If life is a game this assuredly is not the way to play it. The laws of the game, fixed from eternity, make it impossible for to-day to be a success if yesternight was spent in dissipation. Talk of orthodoxies and heterodoxies! The modern heterodoxy, beside which all others sink into insignificance, is the neglect by men and women of the first elements of the science of living.

Carpe diem, says the Roman poet. "Pluck the day." We should be able to do it now to better effect than Horace. The fruit is richer. "Here and now," as an American writer has it, "is life eternal, with gleams of inexhaustible possibilities around and beyond us." Truly it is a great thing to be alive to-day. When its hours have passed we shall sleep in our beds, expecting that the Power that has withdrawn our consciousness will to-morrow set it going again. In that faith a healthy soul goes to its final sleep, looking to the same beneficent Almighty for a yet more wondrous awakening.

XXII

Our Personal Fortunes

SOCRATES found the city more interesting than the country, as did Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb a good many centuries after. To all cultured minds, indeed, the appeal of the city is immense ; it is fascinating to form one in this vast group of souls. You walk down a crowded street. What a story behind every face you look into could it only be fully told ! These men, women, youths, maidens carry each of them the ever-present consciousness of their separate fates. They know to a nicety their income ; how much they have saved, or what they owe. That figure, great or small, what a significance it has for them ! Beyond this each has an account with the universe, vaster and more complicated, of which they also know something, but not so much. The faces all speak. They are all accurate registers of inward experiences. Every line of feature is a history ; it is the hardening into flesh and form of joys and sorrows, of victories and defeats. Each pair of eyes is intent on two prospects. There is a gaze upon all the bustling visible of the city's life ; there is another, awesome and wistful, forward on to that immeasurable unknown to

which they all are being hurried, but which will be alike to no one of them.

This singularity of man, his perpetual wrestle with the unknown, has been from the beginning the subject of his deepest thought. It has created philosophies and religions. In ruminating upon it man has fled instinctively from chance to personality. He could not bear to think that his fate was a mere toss-up. So we have the Latins turning their "Fors," which signified luck, hap, accident, into "Fortuna," not a word only, but a goddess, whose worship was one of the most popular in Italy. Her functions were steadily extended until they spread over the whole private, domestic, and national life. It is a curious illustration of the materialism that at present envelops our own age that our word "fortune" in English, descending from these heights, does duty simply for our money and possessions. When we talk of a man's fortune, in nine cases out of ten we mean his bank balance, his rent-roll, his personal and real estate.

But in what we have here to say we propose to extend the definition. It is that larger account, of which money is a mere detail, with which we propose to deal—our entire traffic with existence, and the outcome of it. In the survey we are struck immediately with one notable difference in the human experience. The events of life, of any life, belong to two classes. A vast number of them are in the class of the calculable; but another host, not less vital or determinative of our fate, belong to the incalculable. As you anticipate to-morrow you can reckon upon a quantity of what may fairly be

termed certainties. The sun will rise at a given hour ; the world will look very much as it does to-day ; the bank will be open ; the laws of commerce will be duly operating ; the principles of the "Rule of Three" will not have changed. This great area of the certainties—an area which, with the growth of human intelligence, is ever widening—enables us to predict a good deal of our future, and with tolerable assurance.

But, as we have said, the peculiarity of the human fate—that which makes life so vividly interesting and at the same time so awesome—is the fact that, into the tamed and well-ordered sphere of the calculable, there are perpetually intruding the mysterious forces of the incalculable. With all our knowledge we do not know our universe yet. We are mere scratchers of its surface, and it is continually springing upon us fresh surprises. A William of Orange shall go through his battles and dangers of all kinds unscathed to stumble fatally at the last over a molehill. You come sound in wind and limb through the earthquake to lame yourself for life over a bit of orange-peel on the pavement. There is an event approaching you, which has been on its way through eternity. All unknowing, your course moves towards it. You will meet it to-morrow and all life will be changed. It may be a face that will then for the first time look on you ; or a book that you will open ; or a death, or a birth. When we have calculated to the last ounce all our powers and faculties, and what they seem capable of accomplishing in the world, we are only at the beginning of the reckoning. Our fortune is an affair not only

of ourselves but of a whole unknown world outside—a world out of which at any moment may come the most wondrous alliances, the most unimaginable fates. Of what avail Napoleon's genius had Kellerman failed to come up with his dragoons at Marengo when all seemed lost for the French? Look back at your own career, and note how at critical points of it the affair has been taken out of your hands, and events mightier than yourself have shaped it for you! What, then, *is* this unknown that incessantly breaks in, that plays so masterly a *rôle* in our drama?

How mighty is the unknown! In comparison with its operation how infinitesimal our own share in our own life! We are here as the results of a force that has been working from eternity. We are thrust into our lot without a word of explanation. Why in this tiny planet instead of the other end of the cosmos? Why a man or a woman and not an archangel or a beetle? Why to have waked in the nineteenth or twentieth century instead of the fifth or the fortieth? Why with this particular status, this mental endowment, this temperament? With your host of queries you knock at the door and get no reply. "Here you are and make what you can of it!" That seems the word, though even this does not come as a word, for no articulate sound ever breaks the silence, except your own voice and that of your brother man, as mystified as yourself.

The modern mind is tortured by this problem and does not see its way to a happy solution. William Watson speaks of man as "child of a thousand chances 'neath the indifferent sky."

Maeterlinck tends to the same pessimistic view. "For although," says he, "it has not perhaps been incontrovertibly proved that the unknown is neither vigilant nor personal, neither sovereignly intelligent nor sovereignly just, or that it possesses none of the passions, intentions, virtues, and vices of man, it is still incomparably more probable that the unknown is entirely indifferent to all that appears of supreme importance in this life of ours." This is the Heine spirit, which regards the world as *Das qualvoll uralte Räthsel, und ein Narr wartet auf Antwort*, "that torturing eternal riddle to which only the fool expects an answer."

But things are not, surely, as bad as that. Else the world could hardly be so comfortable and merry a place. For our part, instead of the cosmic indifference we are struck at every point with the cosmic kindness. Consider our way of coming into this world! Into a universe where million-ton forces are hurtling; where suns are blazing at temperatures a thousand times hotter than our furnaces; where stars and planets are rushing across space at inconceivable velocities; into this tremendous scene comes the little child, life's feeblest spark, that a breath would extinguish. Yet it lies quietly on its mother's breast, encircled by that most wonderful of products, a mother's love. The blazing suns, the million-ton forces do not hurt it; they caress it; co-operate to its safety and growth. From the beginning our bairn, in this most extraordinary scene of things, is quite at home. Wind and sun, sea and shore, will be its playfellows. Inside it, packed away in mind and body, is a whole apparatus of

happiness. This, at least, seems more than a cosmic indifference.

Consider also that stream of tendency on which we are all afloat, its quality, and the point towards which it flows. The force of gravitation which keeps our earth suspended over empty space, and whirls it round the sun, is not less mighty than the invisible power which operates unceasingly, though invisibly, in the sphere of the human consciousness, moving always in one direction. Keeping pace with the process in the material world by which flaming gases are converted into solid earth, and earth into vegetable, and vegetable into animal, and animal into man, does this inner force, working ever on the mind, lift it from barbarism to reason, from reason to morals, from moral to spiritual. On this unseen power the soul rests as secure as our planet on the viewless air. It is as men's acquaintance grows with this power and its laws that they become ever bolder in their experiments with life. They discover that every rudest experience has a moral basis, is packed with moral issues. They see that each event as it passes over us leaves its own deposit, which forms henceforth a new part of ourselves. They see, further, that, according to our treatment of these experiences will be the kind of deposit they leave. What a happening leaves in us depends on what we bring to it. Nothing happens to us which is not of the nature of ourselves. Thus ultimately our moral fortunes are recognised as our only real ones.

It is out of this higher discernment that the heroisms and martyrdoms have grown that age after

age have illuminated history. So sure have the great souls become of the strength and universality of the moral law that they have cheerfully ventured their whole private fortune upon it. Plato knew the secret when, almost in the language of St. Paul, he declared that all things work for good to the good man. So did the Stoics, who affirmed that if we acted in harmony with the Eternal Reason no harm could befall us. "Everything great and good," says Fichte, "on which our present existence rests, and from which it has proceeded, exists only because noble and powerful men have resigned all the enjoyments of life for the sake of ideas." They did this because of their complete assurance that the Power behind the ideas would more than vindicate them.

It is when considerations of this sort have gained their full hold upon us that we have perforce to break at once with the pessimism of our time and with the brutal worldliness that seems now also in the ascendant. If the universe is moral; if the life is more than meat and the body than raiment, what kind of intelligibility is there in making our career, to its last hour, a mere mad rush for material accumulation? What kind of inner growth is to be had out of your twenty millions? The soul has no place for them. You can neither build them into you nor take them with you. Cicero wonders that men, as they come nearer their journey's end, should go on burdening themselves with more and more luggage. We are minded of the picture which Erasmus draws, in his "Praise of Folly," of "decrepit old fellows that look as hollow as

the grave into which they are falling, that rattle in the throat at every word they speak, . . . whose skin seems already dressed into parchment, and their bones already dried to a skeleton," but who, as he goes on to describe, grasp with unabated eagerness after more worldly good and more fleshly delight. Folly, truly. The life-riddle is not solved that way.

We have spoken here so far only of the universal moral laws and of the stream of tendency. Christianity has translated these terms into something more affirmative. Behind law it discerns a Person. In our daily experiences it bids us recognise the ever-fresh revelation of a gracious Will. And the religious instinct which supports these affirmations justifies itself by its inner effects upon us. Here is a view which makes for inner serenity, for cheerfulness, for the utmost daring of aspiration, for the energy which insists on getting the best out of ourselves. The faith that lifts you most, that extracts from outer events the wholesomest nutriment, that makes for the fullest life in yourself and your neighbours—is not this plainly the thing to seek? In this light our personal fortunes seem after all in good hands, and we join with our poet in his valorous song :

Grow old along with me !
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was made :
 Our times are in His hand
 Who saith " A whole I planned,
 Youth knows but half ; trust God : see all, nor be afraid ! "

XXIII

Friends and Friendship

ONE wonders at times whether modern life offers a friendship at all resembling that of antiquity. At any rate we do not talk of it as did the ancients. The "*De Amicitia*" sounds, much of it at least, strange to our ears. We do not find amongst our young men alliances such as that between Harmodius and Aristogeiton, or between Damon and Pythias, or Orestes and Pylades. Have we in modern society anything akin to the passionate devotion which Montaigne expresses for the memory of La Boetie, or that which impels Sir Thomas Browne to say : " I never yet cast a true affection on a woman ; but I have loved my friend as I do virtue, my soul, my God " ?

The old Norwich physician was, we fear, somewhat of a woman-hater, but his remark suggests a prominent reason for the difference on this subject between earlier ages and our own. In classic times especially the intense attachments between men owed themselves very largely to the inferior place of woman in the social system. The distinction between man and woman was one not simply of sex ; it was a distinction of intellectual and moral

caste. Woman was an instrument of pleasure, a subordinate factor of the social life. The ideal perfection was virile. And when to this is added the fact that the attachments between men were often connected, amongst the Greeks especially, with practices which our morality decisively condemns, we have some part of the reason, if not all, for that striking divergence of tone on this theme between the classic life and literature and our own.

But friendship, if we do not rhapsodise upon it, is yet for the twentieth century a live enough theme. The friendships we form and keep remain for all of us one of the outstanding features in the life history. Our friends are a kind of certificate of character. The quality of an age or a civilisation might be measured by its capacity for friendship. If it could be said truthfully of our time that we were producing nothing better in this line than acquaintance ; that the cash-nexus, as Carlyle called it, had taken the place of the old devotion, this, indeed, would be enough to prove our degeneracy. There are symptoms in that direction which we need to take note of. And for our individual selves it may be wholesome to turn an eye for a moment upon our conduct and fortunes in this department, and on the ideals we have been pursuing.

The best friendships, as a rule, are those that begin young. Life's iron is then fire-hot, and we weld easily. And the special happiness here is that, properly managed, these unions are often for all the years. In the college common room we stumble upon a brother soul which vibrates responsive to our own, and now after three or four decades, and when we

are almost at the end of the journey, the music is still going on. Our careers have been wide apart, our fortunes different, our meetings perhaps infrequent ; and yet the mere sense that our friend is yonder, thinking his thoughts and doing his work, is a strength and a companionship to us. How much so, we shall know when he has gone. A soulful intimacy of this kind acquires an ever better flavour with the years. And here it is that a mere self-seeking ambition defeats itself in the search for the prizes of life. In the rush for worldly advancement, our pusher, eager for more brilliant alliances, drops his old friends, or, what is worse, adopts towards them an attitude of condescension. What he has gained in this process we will not inquire. We know what he has lost. Such a man has no friends. To apply this title to his new entourage would be too cynical. And the friendless man, whatever height he has climbed to, is surely a being to be pitied.

The ideal friendships come from the knitting in each other of our nobler parts. Fellowship in great enterprises, a common aspiration concerning life's deepest things, are their truest foundation. This it is which makes a genuine religious communion so uniquely beautiful a thing. When men can find a real spiritual leader, the union of soul between him and them is heaven's own marriage. There is nothing in the sphere of feeling so exquisite. No language, we suppose, could express how Paul's companions felt towards him, and this was only a faint reflex of what an earlier generation felt towards Jesus. When a great and withal gracious

soul appears in the world, and begins to exhale its strength and sweetness, the circle that forms around it constitutes our heavenliest image of society. Such was the group around the noble Origen, which Gregory Thaumaturgus, one of his disciples, speaks of as "this sacred fatherland." Says he of that fellowship: "The very first day of his receiving us was in truth the first day to me and most precious of all days, since then for the first time the true sun began to rise upon me." Such was the company that gathered round Bernard in the Clairvaux wilderness; such the fellowships of the "Brethren of the Common Life" that grew up in mediæval Europe; and those later of the Moravians and the early Methodists, and that of the gifted Frenchmen who still later drew around Lamennais at La Chênaie.

Fellowship of this sort might be described quite accurately as a seeking and finding of God in each other. For it is the divine element in us, the something, as Browne puts it, "that was before the elements and owes no homage to the sun," that we here commune with. We love our brother for what he is revealing to us of our God. Such friendship transcends all difference of rank and station. The feeling Lord Shaftesbury had for his old Baptist nurse, from whom, as a child, he learned what genuine religion meant, was, be sure, of a sort he could not offer to mere rank and riches. It was a spiritual affinity which knit the gay and wealthy Alcibiades to the poor and homely Socrates. A real spiritual value will indeed always and everywhere assert itself as against any exterior one. A man in

England can, by merely being rich enough, get obedience and hat-touching from his footman. But he cannot get his soul that way. The devotion of a Caleb Balderstone is not a cash product. It was not by any cash process we come by the delightful picture which Izaak Walton gives us of Richard Hooker and his poor parish clerk, who "did never talk but with both their hats on, or both off, at the same time." Wealth in this age is doing its hardest and its brutalest to win in everything supremacy, but the soul, through all, mocks at its endeavours.

There is one respect in which our age in the matter of friendship has improved on earlier times. The best minds to-day, in their regard for each other, are proof against very wide differences of opinion. It is the modern spirit, and surely a good one, which shows in Huxley's devotion to two such widely separated men as Darwin and Gordon. "He and Darwin," says he, "of all the people I have known in my life, are the two in whom I have found something bigger than ordinary humanity—an unequalled simplicity and directness of purpose—a sublime unselfishness." The feeling here is what we get in Carlyle and Sterling, who, at one phase of their career, as the former put it, "agreed in everything except opinion." One of the best things we know of Dupanloup is that, when his *protégé* Renan renounced Catholicism and the Church, the Bishop offered him money to start on his literary career. True souls can see each other behind their arguments. We have, we say, in these later ages grown somewhat in this respect. We love Luther, but not

because he refused to shake hands with Zwingli over their difference about the sacrament ; no, nor for describing Erasmus, who was a fine man too, and whom he had called once his " dearest brother," as " that venomous viper Erasmus of Rotterdam." He would hardly have put it that way had he lived in our time, though it has to be confessed that even now theologians have hardly grown out of the habit of calling each other names.

One could write many chapters on the ethics of friendship. A first-class maxim is that we should offer our friends always of our best and never of our worst. We owe it to them that we should show " our lighted side." There is so much in Hazlitt's remark that " a good companion is emphatically the greatest benefactor." E. L. Godkin describes the best office of a friend in what he says of Lowell : " He proved to me for twenty-five years a most delightful friend—for he kept up a constant supply of what was most grateful to me, sympathy and encouragement." Diderot has been for a century and more a terrible fellow for the theologians, but surely his faculty of friendship should cover a multitude of his sins. Mr. Morley does not exaggerate when he says of him : " He was content to take friendship as the right, the duty, or the privilege of rendering services without thought of requiring either them or gratitude for them in return. . . . He seemed to admit every claim on his time, his purse, and his talents." Men of this sort puzzle our orthodoxy. When we expel them from religion the question forces itself—" From what religion, that of doctrine or of practice, of the head or of the heart ? "

We have in these later times also made a vast improvement on the friendships of the ancients, in that some of the highest and purest are found between men and women. Christianity has here a mixed record, but its total effect has been undoubtedly upward. Against the ascetic fanaticisms which regarded the sex, to use a monkish phrase, as "the gate of hell," we have to set, in those very times, the noble relations of Chrysostom with Olympias, and Jerome with Paula, and later on of Dante with his Beatrice and Petrarch with his Laura. From the beginning, indeed, the genuine Christian note was a long advance on the current paganism. In the third century Clement of Alexandria offers a doctrine of man and woman which is not out of date to-day. "For if the God of both is one, the Master of both is one also; one Church, one temperance, one modesty. Their food is common, marriage is an equal yoke; respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love—all are alike." It would be hard to-day to meet a man of real value who would not be willing to acknowledge that much of his best inspiration, as well as the most helpful sympathy, has come from women. More and more the fellowship of souls overleaps the sex barriers.

Our inner progress could be accurately measured by the range and quality of our friendship. As the quality heightens the range extends. "*Qui Deum amat, amat omnes*," as Leibnitz says. We sympathise with that saying of St. Teresa about the demons: "How unhappy—they do not love!" And in loving men we learn, as Fenelon said to Destouches,

“to expect little from them.” Why, indeed, should you look for this and the other in return? Is not the pure joy of loving and serving reward enough in itself? As you travel along this line it becomes more and more difficult to hate. We hardly need Augustine’s reminder: “Most often when you think you are hating an enemy, you are hating your brother without knowing it.” Friendship of this order, fed and inspired from the highest sources, beginning its action in the private circle of those nearest us, spreads and spreads till it encompasses the world. And it will be the growth of this power, more than the achievements of science or the harnessing of the world’s physical forces, that will ultimately bring to our race its age of gold.

XXIV

On Being There

THERENESS is a theme which, when we come to think of it, is full of philosophy and full of morals. Of imagination and poetry also. Some of us, as we lie awake at nights, are pursued with the thought of being there ; in places we have dreamed of—the uttermost deeps of ocean, the centre of the Sahara, the awful solitude of inter-stellar spaces. It is so difficult for us to realise, in our homely life of the city or the country parish, that just as actual as the shop across the road is, at this moment, the flaming centre of the sun or the wastes of the polar realm—“ where no man comes, or hath come since the making of the world.” And these things have been there through the ages before history, before man, before time. And someone has always been there, in actual contact with and knowledge of them. For it is an axiom of philosophy that there is no reality apart from spirit. There could be no whiteness, no colour, no extension even, were there no consciousness to apprehend these things.

When we come from the visible to the invisible we are shut up also to the same belief—the belief

in an omnipresent Thereeness in touch with every finite mind. There could be no community of thinking, apart from a basis of thought which is universal, a Supreme Thinker who gives the law by which all intellects operate. How curious that this belief in Omnipresent Mind, which to-day is the starting-point of a spiritual philosophy, should have been made one of the subjects of scornful reproach against the early Christians! The heathen writer Cæcilius says of them: "What monstrous, what portentous notions do they fabricate! That that God of theirs, whom they can neither show nor see, should be inquiring diligently into the characters, acts, nay, the words and secret thoughts of all men!" The sneer to us seems singularly misplaced. The ignorance would appear to be on the other side.

We have begun with the transcendental. But the topic is not less fruitful when we turn it into homelier channels. Dealing with actual human life, we find a whole morality wrapped up in the business of being there. Our quality of manhood, our worth to society, our prospects of success in the world, could all be reckoned up in terms of thereeness. Society is based on the faith of finding each one of us, from day to day, in his place. What a trust it is! The City man takes his morning train to town, chatting as he travels with his friend, or conning the latest news. And every day his life depends on yonder grimy brother on the engine plate, or this other in the signal-box, being not only there, but all there, their skill and attention wholly given to the duty they are upon. In the higher ranges of service we see how genius is the faculty of being in

the right spot at the right time ; to be, as Wesley used to say, not where you are wanted, but “ where you are wanted most.” Talent is so largely the faculty of applying your power at just that point of the lever where it will get the greatest purchase. That is how great commanders win their victories. They divine the critical spot and put their whole self into that. A Napoleon, a Nelson, are oftenest where the enemy least want them and least expect them. Carlyle in his “ Cromwell,” giving account of the battle of Preston, says :—“ The Duke (of Hamilton), it will be seen, marches in extreme loose order ; vanguard and rearguard being far apart—and a Cromwell attending him in flank !” It is always so. The conqueror wins by being there. The failures, whether of clerk in the warehouse or the head of an army in the field, are an affair of absence—of body, mind, or both—at the time and place where they are needed.

There are, on this head, disquieting reports concerning the young man of to-day. It is rumoured that his interests are somewhat astray. The post at present assigned him in the world’s work is a post vacant of his mind and heart. To do not his best but his least in it, and to get away from it at the earliest possible to idle and expensive pleasures, are said to be his ruling ideas. Or the work, he thinks, is not good enough for him, and he scamps it while dreaming of the loftier objects of his ambition. The man with stuff in him does not argue in this way. What if his present occupation is not the final or highest he is to reach ! That will not prevent him from putting his back into this which

is before him. Charles Dickens is not less painstaking as reporter, that he is by-and-by to be king of romance. "Here and now is my America," should be the motto for us all. Actually where we are is the battleground where we are to play the man. To be there and all there, to put our utmost soul into the job in hand, is the way of success. A fig for the student who has perpetually to be chasing his thoughts back to his theme! You will do no good till you know how to be absorbed. We love that story of the mathematician who began to chalk some formulæ on the back of a carriage in the street, and was then astonished to find his blackboard moving away from him! His concentration was here undoubtedly a little overdone, but it was this that had made him a mathematician. Here and now! For heaven's sake do not sacrifice your present for any possible future. Let this be the best there is for you, whatever may come after. "Be perfect in regard to what is here and now." Remember always, as Jean Paul has it, that "this future is nothing but a coming present, and the present which thou despisest was once a future which thou desiredst." Is yours a rough and uncouth present? Yet Confucius could say: "With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy in the midst of these things."

It is one of the special gifts of our time—an evidence of the continuous growth of the human spirit—that we are learning to "be there" in another sense. The trained scientific imagination, which enables us to reproduce the past as it actually

was, and not as mythology and legend have created it for us, is to-day revolutionising both history and theology. The West is grappling in earnest with the problems which the East has set it in morals and religion. A trained and sober criticism is dissipating the fog in which the Oriental mind had steeped the original Christian facts, and showing them to us in the clear atmosphere of realism. Modern Christians are in consequence becoming primitive Christians. They are beholding Christ as the first disciples beheld Him, and loving Him as they did, only with a better trained understanding.

And concurrently with this mental growth there has been a growth of the soul which, in yet another direction, opens new possibilities of "being there." We are reaching the secret of moral sympathy, which permits us to put ourselves in the place of the other man. When the lesson has been fully learned, or even on any large scale in the world, what a revolution we shall have! It is only as we look at our brother from the outside that we can cherish feelings of enmity towards him. When once we have reached the point of feeling him, as it were, from the inside, when we can taste his bitterness and chagrin as though it were our own, the whole shameful joy at his humiliation and downfall will have become impossible to us. He, too, then, is a companion soul, whose heavy burden and whose hard fight make our thought about him one only of sympathy and desire to aid!

The sense of "being there" is entering very deeply to-day into our religious thought. It is, for instance, revising our whole view as to the

principle and method of punishment. Here, surely, was need of revision. According to the older idea the myriads of the lost were handed over to Satan, he being regarded as worst in this universe, to be tortured according to his fiendish caprice. What a gaol theory this! The Best of Beings to entrust His creatures to the worst! To-day our prison governors are required above all things to be men of character and humanity. We do not put our criminals in charge of our chief criminal. Whatever hells the universe contains are governed, be sure, by God, not the devil. He is there by virtue of His omnipresence. And He can be there in no other character than that which forms His essence, the character of Perfect Love. This in no degree minimises sin nor punishment, but it leaves both in the hands of the All Perfect, not in those of the all damnable.

To come back to the present and the human. Most people, especially the young, are intent on some sort of "getting there." On every hand heights rise above us kindling desire to climb them. And the ambition is no bad thing in its way; properly handed, one of our best things. It is one of our highest titles that we are climbers. The question is as to the kind of summits we are after, and what we expect when we reach them. One matter to be settled with ourselves at the start is that whatever outside elevation we attain, whatever accumulations we make, will have no effect whatever in satisfying us. At the topmost peak you are at the work of wishing just as much as when you were at the bottom. And to gain the thing you wanted

is often enough to lose it. Possession is an impish Puck that is likely enough to make a fool of you. You grasp your treasure to see it come to pieces in your hand. Says Greville in his Memoirs : " In the course of three weeks I have attained the three things I have most desired in the world for years past, and upon the whole I do not feel that my happiness is at all increased."

Is life, then, a cheat ? Only a cynic would say so. Its business is to train us to the right direction in our climbing, to show us the proper " there " to be reached. And here comes in the supreme office of religion. It reveals to us a spiritual world whose " here " and " there " have no connection with space, yet are the surest and most abiding of realities. The progress towards these altitudes is not measured in miles, nor can it be promoted by the most ingenious of mechanical engineering. There are no tickets to be purchased on this line ; no saloon carriages ; it is all plain tramping. In this progress the millionaire is no better off than the artisan. He is, in fact, handicapped by the weight he carries. The travellers, unlike those others, have no misgivings as to the kind of region they are entering, or as to the satisfactions it offers. As the steps mount the air becomes ever purer, the view more majestic, the sense of innermost wellness the more pronounced. One is continually happening on great moments, such as that which Lowell describes when the room he was in seemed filled with the presence of God ; or that of the American physician, Dr. Bucke, of whom Professor James speaks, who in a kind of prophetic ecstasy " saw that the

universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary a living Presence ; I became conscious in myself of eternal life."

Getting there—to *this* "there"—is plainly worth the trouble. There is absolutely no doubt as to the existence of the region, and none either as to its accessibility. You may deny a future life, or anything else you choose. But when it comes to the soul's Promised Land, high up, invisible, you may spare the breath of negation, for there are people who are living in it. And being there they have a shrewd suspicion, born not of the mind's logic, but of an experience so much deeper, that this region is an eternal one, and their relation to it eternal. Let us conclude with a word on this point of Renan, where, speaking of the Port Royalists he says : " Sister Marie-Claire, exclaiming ' Victory, Victory,' with her last breath . . . proved that man by his will creates a force the law of which is not the law of the flesh : she set forth the nature of spirit by an argument superior to all those of Descartes, and in showing us the soul quitting the body, as a ripe fruit drops from its stalk, she taught us not to pronounce too lightly on the limits of its destiny."

The Mind's Adjustments

THERE are two master characteristics of the mind, the study of which, properly conducted, may carry us far. These are an infinite variability combined with a not less striking underlying unity. There is no better illustration of what we mean than the human face, where you have at every moment a new expression, but beneath all a central identity which we never mistake. There are, it is true, both faces and souls where mobility seems the leading feature. Think of the play of expression in a Garrick! Diderot says that he once saw him "pass his head between two folding doors, and in the space of a few seconds his face went successively from mad joy to moderate joy, from that to tranquility, from tranquility to surprise, from surprise to astonishment, from astonishment to gloom, from gloom to utter dejection, from dejection to fear, from fear to horror, from horror to despair, and then reascend from this lowest degree to the point whence he had started." And yet, through all contortions and all disguises, the Garrick face, like the Garrick soul, was one, and could change into no other.

As in the body so in the mind nothing is more marvellous than this play of change round certain immovable points. No one moment of consciousness is the same as another. There is here a perpetual movement, a movement largely outside our own volition, an incessant whirl of pulsations in the primordial mind-stuff. Where our consciousness comes from, how it is related to the material conditions, by what hidden machinery it evolves its phenomena of sensation and thought, all this is to us an unfathomable mystery. We are the spectators rather than the producers of its effects. The largest part of what we call ourself is as unknown to us as the other side of the moon.

What we know is that this hidden machinery is incessantly at work producing one kind of result—namely, a perfect adjustment between ourselves and the outside world. It has at every moment to solve a new equation. At every moment that *cause célèbre*, “Ourselves *v.* the Universe,” takes on a new form, a form which requires a fresh arrangement of the constituents. The problem is, out of this hurly-burly within and without, to construct a working equilibrium, and it is wonderful to see how the thing is done. The consciousness of a man who has lived sixty years in the world has encountered countless millions of these puzzles, and has solved them all. Every event of his life, trivial, critical, solemn, ludicrous, joyous, tragic, has received in that interior, subconscious workshop its special handling. To each has been fixed with infallible certainty the appropriate sensation. His wedding-day, the death of his best-beloved, his greatest

success, his most disastrous failure, have witnessed in turn a new mental adjustment, in rigid correspondence with the fact. In addition to these separate events there have been large groupings of experience that have been managed with a similar precision. The immense transitions represented in the passage from youth to manhood and from manhood to old age ; the opening of new horizons, the decay or destruction of earlier beliefs ; the entry upon totally fresh circumstances or modes of living—all these interior operations, enormously complicated, vast in their range and results, are carried out, one may say, without a break or a hitch. There are in the process oscillations, disturbances, inner storms and conflicts, but these are part of the movement, contributors to the fore-ordained result. Through all, in a normal career, the mind retains its equilibrium ; it always solves its problem.

Nothing is more interesting, or more helpful to faith, than to observe these adjustments in face of the graver crises. The cosmic system to which man has been introduced is not a coddling system. His world is an arena where he meets at every point with calls upon his strength and his courage. The system is a conscription, in which every name is enrolled and no shirking allowed. Every mother's son and daughter of us has extremities to face—with death at the end and whatsoever may lie beyond. It is an excellent training ground for heroes and the worst of worlds for cowards. Yet, as a French writer puts it, " this obscure universe evidently means kindly by us." It bids us be of good cheer. We are in a rough scene, but the mind is

constructed to meet its roughness. It is in the direr circumstances, indeed, that we best see the wonder of its adjustments. A thoughtful man values his harshest experiences for the insight they have given him into life's secret benignancy. The inside of a catastrophe he has found to be so different from its outer appearance. Have any of our readers been face to face with the prospect of an immediate violent death? The sensation is quite other than timidity would have imagined. The present writer remembers slipping on a rock surface in the Alps, and rolling within a few feet of the abyss. Death seemed certain, but the mental condition was not even painful. Women will receive their death sentence from a specialist in Harley Street, and front it with less disturbance than they have had from a quarrel with the cook. Pessimists would do well to read, on this head, some of our authentic martyrology. Let them study, for instance, the story of Perpetua, one of the North African martyrs in the Decian persecution, as given in her own words. Apart from theology let them take it as a study in mental conditions. Says she, "The gaol became to me suddenly a palace, so that I liked to be there better than anywhere else." She writes up her diary to the night before being delivered to the wild beasts. "This is what I have done up to the day before the sports; how the sports themselves will go, let some one else write if he pleases." This delightful young soul is positively gay at her prospect, gay as the veteran More, who, consoled by the same religion, uttered his merry jest as he laid his white head upon the block.

It is not necessary, however, to go to the tragic element in life for proofs of our doctrine. Some of the most striking illustrations lie elsewhere. History shows us every conceivable variety of circumstance, and everywhere the mind's wonderful adaptations under them. We are not in love with asceticism, yet we are glad the world has had its ascetics, if only to reveal the thousand different happinesses it contains. Bernard and Francis, following poverty on her stoniest ways, struck there on a mental state which they preferred to all others. The mechanic, the factory worker, engaged in a monotonous and seemingly soulless occupation, finds precisely in that fact a mental freedom which many a humble toiler has turned to richest uses. The Methodist collier composes his sermon while he drives his pick; the cobbler thinks his way through politics and religion as he sews and hammers. Even madness has its peculiar joy. Do we not remember that letter of Lamb to Coleridge? "Dream not, Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of fancy till you have gone mad!" There is no condition, indeed, in which the mind does not labour, and with a certain success, to produce its balance. Men, under pressure of one kind or another, have yielded assent to the most horrible doctrines, and yet have lived happily. The reason is that their inner consciousness has always elaborated for itself a place of refuge. Said Dr. Johnson to Boswell on the subject of Eternal Punishment: "Sir, some of the texts of Scripture on this subject are indeed strong, but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation." Exactly. No man takes his soup

as hot as it is cooked. Men may subscribe the most terrific creeds and fancy they believe them. But their innermost mind will have nothing to do with extremes, and calmly works on the hypothesis that the Universe is reasonable.

And this brings us to an aspect of the theme which belongs peculiarly to our own day. The position which now overshadows all others for thoughtful men is the profound change which is working in the region of our most momentous beliefs. On the questions of man's origin and destiny, of revelation, of the interpretation of the Christian facts, we are in sight of nothing less than a revolution. The best minds are already fully occupied with the movement; and what fills the best minds is, by an inevitable law, certain within a given time to permeate the entire community. The beams that at first gild the topmost peaks will, later on, give daylight to the valleys. Cautious and timid souls are aghast at the signs. They imagine that if a given view is taken from them the privation will work death to the soul. It is consoling here, however, to note Nature's way of working in these matters, to note what actually happens. The process man is now going through is no new one. All through the ages he has been passing from one phase of belief to another. And always when he is summoned to advance, he finds the way prepared for him. Steps have been cut for him in the snow; the precipices have been barricaded. It is the subconscious within him, rather than his own noisy argumentation, that has prepared his solutions. The great controversies, indeed, seem never to be settled by argument. We

do not so much refute error as grow out of it. What to us now are the mediæval theories of the Atonement, the contests of Nominalists and Realists, the five points of the Calvinist-Arminian controversy? These battles are over not because this or that side was declared victor, but because the great human interests have shifted their ground. Nature, in conducting her child, keeps open his communications not only with the past, but also with the future. Man's present views are provisions on the way. And the supply has perpetually to be renewed. It is a wilderness-manna which will not keep sweet in perpetuity.

And yet, however swift and far our thought may run in this direction, it meets always with a limitation. Recurring to our opening illustration, the greatest mobility of feature never destroys the face's unity. And the mind's adaptability, carried to the utmost lengths, serves only, we discover, in the end to reveal more vividly the ultimate oneness both of its character and its aim. The soul cannot be contorted to the extent of denying itself; it cannot amid all its seeming divagations be kept permanently out of its appointed road. It is when we study this side of it that, amid the immense perturbations of our time, we find our point of security and of rest. Man may pursue his speculations to the utmost extremes, but his soul, like the actor's face when the grimace is over, resumes its natural expression. There have, for instance, been eras of history when men, led by one particular impulse, or pursuing one particular line of thought, have cut themselves loose from

religion. In the eighteenth century the French Encyclopædists led their countrymen into materialistic Atheism. Baron d'Holbach, with his "System of Nature," proved to his own satisfaction that man was a machine, his mind a function of the body, that death ended all, that religion was an invention of the priests, that the universe arose from the clash of atoms, that God, freedom and immortality were scientific impossibilities. And the reasoning, if we keep to his one particular line, is not easy to answer.

What *is* the answer? Here, in considering the matter, we see the mind's method of adjustment. The reply lies, not in the speculative reason, but in something so much deeper. When Voltaire, while a discussion on these subjects was going on, turned the servants out of the room, lest, as he said, they should imbibe these views and then murder their masters, he touched in his satirical way the fringe of the reply. Dr. Johnson, declaring that, as to moral freedom, all the argument was against it but all experience for it, was still nearer the mark. But it was reserved for Kant to reach the nerve of the matter when, in his "Practical Reason," after admitting all the force of the logical argument, he refounded our doctrine of God, Immortality and Freedom on the soul's inward necessities. He put into logical form the truth that the heart's reasons are deeper than those of the intellect. It is the heart which affirms the spiritual world, which affirms the Eternal Perfection, which affirms man's portion in that world, and in that Perfection. We accept its verdict, believing that in and behind it is a reason deeper than our syllogism.

In a word, Atheism is refuted by the contents of the soul. The soul's argument is in its own aspiration and ceaseless desire. It has a scale of values, and it knows that purity, love, reverence, fidelity, are life's highest things, and that these, because they are highest, must be truest. It knows that their existence in man in the germ means their existence elsewhere in fulness. Our proof of God is that the soul is what it is.

And thus it comes to pass that when science and philosophy have said their last word, the mind's final adjustment will be a religious adjustment. Here, and nowhere else, does it find refuge against the infinite mutations of time and the world. It is an open secret known to all pure souls. The author of the "Imitation" has put it for us with his own simple beauty: "When a man cometh to that estate that he seeketh not his comfort from any creature, then first doth God begin to be altogether sweet to him. Then shall he be contented with whatever doth befall him in this world, then shall he neither rejoice in great matters, nor be sorrowful in small, but entirely and confidently he committeth himself to God, who is unto him all in all."

XXVI

Of the Incomplete

THERE are a thousand ways of looking at life, a thousand different ideas which you may severally use as keys to its interpretation. And the keys will each of them open some doors, though it is the height of folly to suppose they will open all. There is, for instance, our sense of the incomplete—a foundation principle on which a whole philosophy and at least half a theology could be safely reared. We aspire here to no such pretentious piece of architecture ; but it may be worth while to cast a glance at the kind of material that would be available for such a structure.

What, in the first place, do we mean by our term ? If we saw a man minus his head we should have no doubt about pronouncing him incomplete. But what if he *had* his head, and the whole apparatus of arms and legs, of bodily and mental faculty ? Is he complete then ? That raises our whole question, a question the answers to which, before we have done with them, seem likely to carry us far. There is, as is suggested by our headless man, an incompleteness that stares us in the face, glaringly perceptible to us all. Our man must have this particular outfit

of head, limbs and what else to pass muster ; though why a thinking soul should need such a machinery may well give us pause. On the other side of the universe the fashion in organisms may be quite other. Do we not all feel at times like Joubert, of whom it was said, that he had the air of a soul which had by chance encountered a body, and was doing the best he could with it ?

We will grant, however, that on this planet and under present circumstances, there is a completeness of bodily structure which is rigorously demanded in our notion of a man. Yet about this fully equipped human of ours, possessed of his whole complement of body and mind, the next thing that impresses us is his entire incompleteness. Want, and the constant sense of it, form his *peculium*, his distinguishing note. His bodily life is one long demand. At every moment his lungs cry for air, his eye for light, his ear for sound. His appetites are bold beggars which knock constantly at a hundred doors. Then behind the body lie the pondering mind, the aspiring soul, the craving heart. When we think of it our man cannot, by the very nature of him, reach the status of a finished product, for the things which are added to him only increase his desire and capacity of reception. Here, evidently, is a being always in the making. He stands not for finality, but for movement. So long as his present relation to the universe subsists it can never be said that he is complete.

It is curious to note the way in which this feature of human life has been taken by different observers. The imperfect is by turns fiercely rebelled against,

stoically accepted as the inevitable, or theologically pronounced upon as an element of the general corruption and evil of the world. Taine, from his outside position, speaks as Calvin might have done, of "mutilated human nature, dragging its incurable hurt along the roads time opens to it." Endless has been the wail—and in some of the world's finest writing—over the incomplete in all human achievement and experience. We mourn over "the petty done, and the undone vast." We complain of our unsatisfied desire, and still more of that hour when, with the outer desire satisfied, the soul still feels its ache. We echo Goethe's cry that "the wished for comes too late." We know the experience which Stevenson in his "Ordered South" has so movingly described, when, coming to beautiful scenery which for years we have yearned to look at, we find in ourselves no answering thrill, but only a dulled soul that refuses to enjoy. Is not life then a tragedy? Eternally to come short, to reach the goal and find it no goal, to wander year by year in the wilderness, with cloudy pillar in front, but failing ever to reach our Promised Land? So humanity, in many keys and on divers instruments, has uttered its musical pathetic lament.

But is this all that may be said? Assuredly the mere saying of things, be they never so wise, will not, by itself, lift the burden from life. Sorrow, when we have completely explained it, will not cease to be sorrow. Nevertheless, in this region some new conceptions seem to be rising, destined, may be, to effect real changes in the outlook, and with them a not inconsiderable inner and spiritual

consolement. It is dawning upon us that, wherever we take it, the incomplete is not an evil, but a good ; that its meaning is not curse, but blessing ; that its awkward-looking gaps and crevices are, if we narrowly observe them, openings into something vaster than we knew before.

There is a remark by John Ruskin which will start us excellently on the road we want here to follow. Says he, concerning art, "Nothing is satisfying that is complete ; every touch is false that does not suggest more than it represents." Have not all of us who love art felt the force of this ? The strength of a great painting is in its appeal to the imagination, in the call it makes on our faculty of interpretation. It does not so much fill the eye as stir the soul. And where has the painter here learned his lesson but from Nature, the greatest of all artists ? It is the fascination of that piece of hers—the visible universe—that what it delineates to us, vast though that be, is as nothing to what it suggests. As we study the visible she offers, we recognise that this patch of appearance may have a thousand relations to the invisible of which we know nothing. Bradley, our Oxford metaphysician, in his "Appearance and Reality," observes that "every fragment of visible nature might, so far as is known, serve as part in some organism not like our bodies." A similar observation may be made of events. That dark side of history which we call catastrophe—the bursting of volcanoes, the upheaval of earthquakes, the devastations of fire and pestilence—are fitted by us into an order of conception and feeling which we call "the terrible," "the calamitous," and so

on. But this shows only the limit of our interpreting faculty. These events may, on some other plane of being, appear as parts of a whole that carries a quite other significance. When, then, we speak of Nature's deformities, of her incompleteness, let us correct ourselves, remembering that it is our interpretation always that is deformed and incomplete.

The same remark may be made in another sphere of interpretation—that of our present-day religion. It has ever been the aspiration of the theologian and the ecclesiastic to offer a system that is complete. Rome, with her "*Semper eadem*," makes finality and infallibility the note of the Church. Protestantism has been not less eager. The Reformers argued from a perfect Scripture, and built up what they deemed four-square, unassailable theologies. And one would have thought if Providence intended man to be religious and Christian, it would have taken care at least to make things quite shipshape and secure on this side. But no such thing! To-day the "immutable" Roman Church rocks visibly on its foundations. The theological systems, Protestant and other, are seamed with cracks; at a dozen points we see through them to the open sky. The documents, the evidences on which so many brave assumptions rested, have to the modern examiner changed entirely in their aspect and value. Our "complete" theologies have turned out to be so very incomplete! But what then? Has Providence been slovenly? Or do we not discern in all this simply the Spirit's vaster way? Let us here read again our Ruskin: "Nothing is satisfying that

is complete." Our systems were too complete. Their covering was so complete as to shut out the light. They fitted the soul so completely as to stifle its breath and prevent its growth. Do we sigh for a creed so perfect in its demonstration that there were no trouble in believing it? But how if we are here not to be saved from taking trouble, but to be developed by striving? Is it not the very cracks and crevices of the older conceptions that are saving us to-day? Is it not through them we are creeping into a roomier, vaster temple of God?

* From his systems and creeds let us come again to the man himself. The students of the social movement of our time have at last reached the fact that it is out of the calculated incompleteness of the individual that Nature is building up a larger, better humanity. It might be argued here that our individuality—our most precious possession—in itself requires incompleteness, for it supposes distinction from, the absence of, the traits of other personalities. But there is no need for abstractions of that sort. To keep to the evident and the concrete—do we not all realise what we owe socially to our several defects? It is because we individually lack this and that, that we, as a society, lean upon one another, and that the whole fabric of our common life is woven. The woman and the man, the child and the parent, the brain-worker and the handicraftsman, the temperament mystical and the temperament practical—we have here, through a thousand diversities, the aptitude of one fitting into the lack of another, and all in this way contributing

to that organic unity which makes man mighty through his fellow man. As we view the spectacle we realise with Goethe that "only mankind together is the true man, and that the individual can only be joyous and happy when he has the courage to feel himself in the whole."

It is also through the philosophy of the incomplete that we get the clearest of our modern lights on the mystery of evil. The theology of the conscience, studied from this side, is a theology of successive completes and incompletes. St. Paul's pregnant sentence, "I had not known sin except through the law," contains the whole history of moral evolution. There was a stage in the prehistoric story when the human soul—an infant soul—knew a moral completeness that later it found itself to have lost. It was like the lost equilibrium of a good walker who is now learning to ride. From grace and perfectness he has come to awkwardness and physical misery. But the awkwardness and uneasiness that have succeeded the earlier ease and finish are really a progress. The incomplete that has been reached is higher than the complete that was left. So in the moral world the sinner, groaning over his imperfection, is further on than that progenitor of his who knew no sin. What has made our man a sinner? Not the performance of fresh evil. He did all this before. It is the rise in him of a new ideal of good, in the light of which the old life is seen as inferior and therefore bad. From a low grade "complete" he has risen to a higher "incomplete." His consciousness of sin is really a great step upward. The seventh of Romans, that

agonised wail of a stricken soul, is also the history of a soul's ascent.

If there be truth in all this let us harvest the fruit it yields. There is in it for one thing a fruit of joyous living. The imperfections of our life, its ragged ends, its unexplained mysteries, are, truly seen, reasons not for gloom but the contrary. All these things are processes of development, are hints of wonders yet to come. That you are here is the thing, immeasurably greater, if you can see it, than that you are this or that. The actual milestone you have reached is not the point. Is it not something to be on the infinite road ?

Another thing follows, a supreme thing. The incomplete in us is, above all else, the soul's preparation for God. Also is it the abiding and all-sufficient proof of Him. If adaptation is evidence of anything, if the eye suggests light somewhere, and the ear's structure the existence of sound waves, then what is in you and me, the

Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn,

shape one Name as key to their mystery. God is the only possible answer to the human soul. In the apostolic word, "Ye are complete in Him," all philosophy is summed.

Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure
What entered into thee
That was, is, and shall be ;
Time's wheel runs back or stops ; Potter and clay endure.

XXVII

Life's Appeal

SUPPOSING humanity were to overthrow all its accepted religions ; to wipe the slate clean, and from the very beginning to reconstruct a theory of its own presence and significance on this planet ! How would it set about this last work ; what materials would it find ; what kind of a structure would it produce ? The question is not an idle one, for there are multitudes of cultivated people to-day who find themselves quite in the humour for it. The past, with all its legacies, has lost authority over them. It was, they hold, an ignorant past, and has no right to dictate as though it were superior. They deny its call to teach. Could these vanished generations, with their laboured systems, reappear in the world, they would have to sit at our feet, not we at theirs.

When we say that this temper has to be dealt with we are by no means admitting its contention. These things are at best only half truths. All our progress rests on the past, and without it ours would be the blankest of worlds. At the same time to accept its challenge would be enormously interesting. The line it throws us back upon is so infinitely

suggestive. We are brought up sheer in front of Life itself, and set on the business of interpreting its message. Has it a message; one that can be put into language; that you can build a faith, a theology upon? Or are we condemned simply to be ever putting our own fancies on the outside things; mistaking our own shadows for realities? Are we of any import to the universe; or is our notion that the world was made for us of the same order of conceit as that of the Athenian lunatic who imagined that every vessel entering the Piræus belonged to him? It would, indeed, be too presumptuous to suppose that we—that is, the things we are to-day—are the be-all and end-all of the world. What does, however, seem affirmable; what, the more we study things, seems the more impossible to escape from, is the conclusion that a marvellous purpose is busy within and around us, shaping our being for ends of its own, which seem to be nothing less than moral and spiritual ends. Let us take up some of the facts and observe from them how the account stands.

Our appeal is to life, but we have to begin it with a confession of ignorance. We are reminded of the answer of Confucius when his disciple Ke Loo asked him about death: "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?" The answer is as good to-day as when it was uttered. Science is groping after a definition of life, and is opening up problems of its own on this theme with which we shall not here concern ourselves. But we doubt if it will ever reach a formula that will express all the mystery. For our purpose we do not need one.

When we speak here of life and its appeal we mean only the verdicts of consciousness, that common recognisable experience which is known to us all. These facts and experiences we say constitute an appeal; one that is extraordinarily complicated, that produces in us answers that seem often flatly contradictory; one that suggests ultimate meanings beyond our present ken; but which, when studied in its totality, forms, we affirm, none the less a veritable Gospel.

Observe the way we are handled. We are put through a process, precisely as raw cotton is put through a process on its way to the finished article. And there seems, in our case, to be a curious law in the process; one might call it the law of antinomies or contradictions. We get one set of experiences and then their exact opposite. In youth and early manhood, for instance, we see at work a whole machinery of passion. The attraction of the sexes is, at this stage, a purely passional attraction. The blood is hot with desire. As Aristotle puts it, "The young are heated by nature as drunken men by wine." It seems at times a madness, but there is method in it. We have to accept the passions as part of life's purpose in us. Milton finds in them "the very ingredients of virtue," and Vauvenargues is probably right when he declares that to them "we perhaps owe the greatest advantages of the spirit." But this tumult of the blood has a limit. The movement carries to a given point, that of parenthood, and then all is changed. The inner machinery of thought and feeling is reversed and set going in a different direction. There is here

a double parenthood. The father and mother have not only this child of their union ; there is a birth in themselves of an entirely new consciousness. There is little or no freewill here. This is Nature's way with us, not our own. No separate man or woman ever planned for themselves the successive developments. Rather are they the surprised spectators of these phases of their life. Each step has opened a more wondrous prospect ; but neither the scenery, the route to it, nor the force that pushed them along it is of their making. All through they are the agents of a power that does the planning and prepares the result.

And it is hardly possible to mistake the significance of the double appeal that is here made. In this antinomy of passion and parenthood Nature is preaching to us the plainest of sermons. She is clearly no ascetic. She begins by calling to our every faculty. She believes in the senses or she would not have made them, or stirred them as she does. But the senses are with her only a beginning. Man is not to end with them. Their result, in leading to parenthood, is to harness us to duty, to service, to self-sacrifice. They are, it turns out, simply the porters who open doors into the nobler rooms of the spirit.

Here is no word of traditional theology, but these plainest facts seem of themselves to be getting us pretty deep into both ethics and religion. Observe now another of the life antinomies, that of Appearance and Reality. Here Nature appears to be positively laughing at us. She is always a humourist, and theology has made no more deplorable blunder

than in overlooking the fact. There is infinite humour in the love-making preliminary to the discipline of family life. But that is only one trait out of many in her genial comedy-making. She begins by merrily deceiving us. In that lovely book of mediæval religion, the "Ancien Riowle," the writer has some perception of this. He thinks God is playful. "The Lord when He suffereth us to be tempted playeth with us as the mother with her young darling. She flies from him and hides herself, and lets him sit alone and look anxiously round, and call 'Dame!' 'Dame!' and weep awhile; and then she leapeth forth laughing with outstretched arms and embraceth and kisseth him." Yes, life plays hide-and-seek with us with evident gusto. She cradles us in illusions and delights in every kind of make-believe. Our senses trick us. They would have us believe the sun goes round the earth and that our planet is the centre and big thing of the universe. But the jest is carried much further. Our expectations are all merry deceivers. The goods they deliver are not according to advertisement. The satisfaction of desire is, we find, the biggest of dissatisfactions. The moment of winning the prize is the moment of losing it. We grasp a changeling, a something quite different from the thing we pursued.

It would be easy to stigmatise this play as cruel, the mockery as heartless. There have not been wanting critics who have taken this view. And it would be a true one if all ended here. But in the life-process the jest is a kindly one. It is the smile on the face of a giver who takes back

the dangled toy to offer in its place a jewel of price. Nature's illusions are only the veils of the real. With healthy minds her disappointments, so far from producing disgust of life, create only a thirst for a deeper life—and point the way to it. Humanity was quick to perceive this. Its religions have been built upon it. The old Eastern philosophy, which recognised the visible world as phenomenal merely, the projected shadow of a Divine reality beneath, was in fact the human answer to this part of life's mysterious appeal. The illusions, mark you, are in themselves good as long as they last. They contribute to life's zest and enjoyment. And when we find them out it is only to discover that they have changed their function. As in that earlier antinomy of passion and parenthood, they have become now once more the uncouth porters who open to us the gates into new reaches of the spiritual realm.

To take now one more of our paired opposites. Life offers itself to us as for one thing an affair of the ugly, the limited, the imperfect. And over against that there stands in man's heart the indestructible sense of the infinite, the perfect, the wholly beautiful. The Bethlehem birth is perpetually being repeated in this world. Always is the glorious ideal being born into the lowly actual, the sense of the highest coming to consciousness in surroundings of the sordid and the mean. That vision of the Eternal Beauty which Plato saw, and which has dwelt since in every artist breast, is a religion in itself; one against which there is no sceptic answer. That such an appeal as this should come to us out

of life, and find in the soul such a response, is an indestructible foundation for faith. It is not simply that Nature herself is full of beauty. If that were all it would be much. It would show that the power behind was an artist; that there was mind there, and soul. No conceivable play of chance could end in the beautiful. From first to last it is a soul's affair. And the creed taught by it is tolerably clear. It could have no affinity with the ugly. It must reject a sainthood that cultivates dirt. A Liguori living by choice in a wretched narrow room at the back of a staircase, receiving light and air from an opening covered with paper instead of glass, has evidently, in the light of this revelation, mistaken the cosmic idea.

Plainly life's appeal, as it comes to us from the outside, is a plea for the beautiful. An insistent plea, which man will be compelled to answer until his cities, his landscapes, his tools and implements, the whole furniture and surroundings of his existence come under its glorious law. But that is only a beginning. The voices that ring in his soul insist on another beauty. Consider here the soul's quality. There is no revelation so sure as that in the qualities of things. To fire, or water, or sunlight you may give any name you please. No name or lack of name will prevent them from working out into the world all that is hid in their nature. And as with fire or sunlight so with the soul. It works out of its quality, out of that mystery of its essence which is irresistible and indestructible. And its quality, ascertainable whenever it shows itself, is to aspire and to work ever towards the perfect—

the perfect, not only of outward form, but of that inner and spiritual beauty which we call holiness.

What we have here dwelt on is only a part of that life-appeal which speaks in the modern consciousness. There is far more, but this in itself surely is much. It is a revelation as rich as it is authentic and authoritative. It is a revelation without books, without Church, without catechism or tradition. And yet its mandate is as clear as though it pealed from Sinai, or wrote itself on tables of stone. And the burden of it? Surely it is to be of good cheer; to enjoy what life offers; to traverse without faltering its road of experience; to take its illusions and disappointments as openings to deeper things; to realise ever behind it that Power which shares in our laughter and in our tears; which plays with us, but will not let us stop at play; which will have us rest at nothing short of the highest. When from this study of life we open the New Testament we find a name for that Power. Life's unvoiced appeal and this message from Galilee—the message which bids us trust in a Father whose name is Love—seem marvellously in accord.

XXVIII

The Great and the Small

ONE of the first lessons our senses teach us is the difference in the size of things. As we grow older the impression of this deepens, and spreads over much else than what we see. The question of magnitudes, of the scale of objects and of our relation to them, extends from figures to ethics, and on to the innermost spiritual. Here, we perceive, is one of Nature's unspoken sermons—a discourse of infinite depth, and with a thousand applications. In the great and the small are wrapped up at once a theology and a discipline. The contemplation of them is a revelation of the ways of God ; the action of them is a constantly operating force on our character and life.

The physical universe, as it opens to the eye of modern science, is our first teacher here. A marvellous teacher, truly. As we survey what it offers we are at a loss to know on which side the greatest wonders lie. Its great and its small are alike in their infinitude. Both go beyond our utmost force of computation, or even expression. As to the first, we have no figures in which to sum the magnitudes which encompass us. The size of our

own solar system is enough to beggar thought. But when we know it as one of millions of solar systems, separated by distances so vast that it would take thousands of years to count the miles which separate the nearest from each other ; when the telescope shows us stars so far off that they have no parallax ; in other words, that when we have changed our view-point by the 180 million miles across which our orbital motion has carried us, these glittering points, seen from this opposite extremity, have not changed their apparent position by a hair's-breadth—we are in a region of magnitudes which we can talk about and grope after, but can never realise. That is our system on its side of greatness.

But the other confounds us not less. The infinitude of the little is one of the revelations of our time. Look into our own body. The anatomist finds each one of us a macrocosm containing in our system a whole universe of sentient life. What do we think of the statement that the veins of any average man contain twenty-five millions of millions of millions of red corpuscles, each a separate, active entity ; that intermingled with these is the immeasurable host of white corpuscles, a race of disciplined fighters incessantly warring on our behalf against swarms of hostile intruders ? With what mind do we contemplate the recent discoveries in radio-activity ; discoveries which show us the atom—the hitherto supposed ultimate of minuteness—as itself infinitely divisible ; that, so far from being a fixed point, it is an aggregate of tens of thousands of particles, revolving with immense velocity round

a centre, as relatively distant from each other as stars in the sky, in bulk not more than a five-thousand millionth part of our atom? This is the kind of universe we are living in; this is the revelation of its physically great and small, so far as it has at present been disclosed to us.

Observing these two extremes, the first point that strikes us is our own position in relation to them. Is not that in itself a thing to contemplate? We seem to have been placed midway. Our readers are doubtless aware of Dr. Russel Wallace's speculations as to man and his earth being the centre of the universe. Without committing ourselves to the views of that eminent scientist, we are at least bound to consider the problem which he offers. Why do we stand where we are in the scheme of things? Whatever or wherever we may be as to physical position, in thought at least we are central in the cosmos. With equal facility we look up and down. We seem at furthest remove from the least and the greatest, while in immediate contact with both. There are, we may well believe, hidden meanings here which it will take ages to disclose. In the meantime our relationship to these two things offers, even to our present stage of intelligence, some very obvious lessons.

Before reaching them, however, there is a consideration which meets us at the threshold, and to which, if only in passing, we must give a word. In studying the question of size, we realise in the most vivid way the two worlds we are living in. There is the material world, where we think in miles, metres or pounds avoirdupois. We say Mont Blanc

is 15,000 feet high ; that the sun's bulk is near a million and a half times that of the earth ; that the house-fly on the pane is less than half an inch long. But the mind that makes these computations has, in its own structure and operations, nothing to do with these figures and sizes. It knows them, but is not of them. Materialism has made some strange enough suggestions in its time, but we have not heard its most ardent disciple arguing that the idea of the sun in our brain is a million and a half times bigger than our idea of the earth. We do not either talk of square thoughts or of yellow emotions. The mind that reports to us all we know of matter proclaims, we see, at every stage of its operations, its own isolation. It weighs and measures matter, but keeps it out of doors. It suffers no invasion of its own august, mysterious realm. The difference between these two worlds will have to be borne in mind in all that follows.

Starting from the physical side, let us recur to the point we noted, of our contact as human beings with the infinitely small and the infinitely great. It is, we may be sure, not by chance that we touch these two things. Our contact is big with ethical meaning. Rightly apprehended, we find in them the two poles of the spiritual life, for they demand from us at once a boundless aspiration and an entire humility. Aspiration, for, say they, there is nothing too great for us ; humility, because the Divinity we seek is not less at the bottom of the scale than at the top. It is along this line that science most effectually aids faith. In that exhibition of the transcendent wonders of the atom which is our

latest revelation, we have a new sanction for the Gospel virtue of lowliness and for its grace of contentment. The investigation which has discovered the infinite potencies of the tiniest visible speck suggests the infinite potencies in our own least and lowest. We see here how our insignificancies, our limitations, are, not less than their opposites, parts of the Divine order. The infinite is not only in the heaven of heavens ; it is also in yonder molecule. And we shall have achieved one of the greatest of all the inner victories when it has become to us an article of faith, a fact of life to be embraced and held fast day by day, that our least and poorest, the side where we do not count, the failure, the weakness that keeps us back from honour, the obstacle that mars our pleasure—that all this, not less than our shining gift, our sense of power, has in it and behind it all the majesty of the eternal purpose. The infinitely great lives with and by the infinitely little. Our weakness, not less than our strength, is a part of God. It is a side of His purpose, an aspect of His life.

And this is indeed a blessed discovery. It puts us in love, not only with a part, but with the whole of our life. We look beyond the sordid surface to the eternal beauty that gleams through. We realise that existence itself is victory. We do not quarrel with its knobs, excrescences, and rough surfaces. We know that weeds, so called, are “plants whose virtues have not yet been discovered.” The doctrine holds of the inner garden as well as of our plot outside. We examine our limitations with a new hopefulness. They are the atomic

side of us. It is, we perceive, only our ignorance which hides from us their mysterious, beneficent working, their stupendous Divine relationships. The counsel of Walter Pater about living "so exclusively in the ideal or poetic elements, the elements of distinction in our everyday life—that the unadorned remainder of it becomes as though it were not," impresses us for its beauty of expression rather than for its truth. It is the sentiment of an Oxford recluse, who knew too little of the rough and tumble of average existence. It is in that rough and tumble, if anywhere, that most of us will have to find ourselves, and it must have its full credit in our scheme of things. The "doctrine of the little," which we can thus apply so helpfully to ourselves, is one we also constantly need in our intercourse with our neighbours. The ancient word "*Maxima reverentia puero debetur*" should be widened in its application. We are to pay the highest reverence to the boy because of what he may be. But our doctrine teaches us to pay it also to the poorest and meanest among us, and that because of what he is. Here, too, could we but see it, is the highest in disguise.

This leads us directly to the question of the great and the small in our interior life. We see here at once how all the physical analogies fail us. The rule to judge by now is not the foot-rule. Euclid gives us no help in the measurement of a great soul. Yet we know one when we see it, and something in our inmost nature forms the register of its dimensions. We see, also, how it comes by its greatness. It is always by alliance with something

greater than itself. The devotion to great causes, the fellowship with great personalities, is in every instance the secret. The second here precedes the first. William of Orange in the death-struggle of the Netherlands, Mazzini in the fight for Italian freedom, give themselves each to his cause, reckless of personal interest, because they have each first established inward alliance with God. The man's self waxes great in proportion as it is forgotten in something larger. Spiritual littleness, on the other hand, exhibits the same law on its opposite side. When a man is self-centred, he inevitably dwindles, and for the reason that such a centre is not strong enough to carry any weight of structure. The New Testament word that we must lose our life to find it is, it thus appears, nothing less than the organic, fundamental law of the spirit.

Drummond, in his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," might have added a chapter on "The Soul's Law of Gravitation." There is such a law, which operates as constantly and as universally as that which keeps the planets in their course. A character, a personality, draws men in exact proportion to its spiritual dimension. We have here the origin and growth of Churches, of religions. The secret of discipleship is a secret of solar attraction. An emancipated nature, grown beyond the dimensions of selfhood, draws the lesser souls by a force irresistible as the sun's action on Mars and Jupiter. Here is an astronomy real as that which occupies our telescopes. As the sun holds and swings the planets, itself drawn by some mightier force which keeps it and them in their vast journey through space,

so here we see central, elect souls by their mass and quality drawing into their light and warmth the lesser natures, to be, in their turn, with their followers, swept on by a gravitation mightier than their own toward the spirit's ultimate bourn.

In the human evolution the great of the physical sphere, while keeping its due place in the cosmic order, will in the end be everywhere recognised as inferior to the other greatness. What the foremost souls have always seen will be seen in the end by the brotherhood at large. A nation, a city, will value itself not by its material bigness, but by the height of its inner life. The glory of Athens, the thrill which comes from Jerusalem, have nothing to do with their diameter, or the census of their population. "What," cries Renan, "is the whole of America beside a ray of that infinite glory with which a city of the second or third order—Florence, Pisa, Siena, Perugia—shines in Italy!" The sentence is, no doubt, a vast exaggeration. But it would be true were America to produce nothing beyond her crops, her iron and steel, and her millionaires. She will be measured in history, as Thucydides said of Attica, by her capacity to produce men. And the measurement of history is akin to the measurement of eternity. When the seer in the Apocalypse says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," the question is, "Who here are the small and who the great?" It were well for us surely to become clear on this point, and, with the least delay possible, to square our theory of values with the one which will there be used in judgment!

XXIX

Our Holy Places

Those holy fields,
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
For our advantage to the bitter cross.

THE lines, familiar to most of us, give us Henry IV., in Shakespeare's great play, explaining to his courtiers his project of a new expedition to Palestine. Is it not, when we come to think of it, a kind of miracle, this Palestine? For ages that strip of land on the far edge of the Mediterranean has drawn the world as the moon draws the sea. In the mediæval time we have hundreds of thousands of men, from kings to peasants, leaving home, family, pleasure, business, that they might look on this piece of earth, that they might open the way to it for their fellow-believers. To-day, under different forms, there is the same mysterious fascination. From England, from America, from states Catholic and Protestant, from the snows of Russia, pilgrims wend there in endless procession. The rich go in luxury, the poor ragged and barefoot, but the same emotion burns in all hearts. The Jew knows this country as the home at once of his race

and of his religion. We English have no such possession of England as the Jew had of Palestine. England is not, to such a depth, the country of our soul. It is our birthplace and our home. But our religion is an exotic. London has not the significance to us of Jerusalem. We have lakes, springs, mountains, but no Lake of Galilee, no well like that of Jacob, no hill sacred as Zion or Olivet. And yet the Jew, to whom the land was all this, the fatherland of both his body and his soul, is in perpetual exile from it! Altogether, we say, a miraculous country.

But there are questions raised here which go beyond Jew and Gentile, beyond Palestine and its pilgrims. That the world should have sacred places at all, that such emotions towards them should arise in the minds of men and sway them as they do, is a matter that in itself claims our fullest attention. Plainly here is an affair not of reasoning or of calculation. These movements are born not of the æsthetic sense, not of trade and profit, not of ambition. We are plainly on the track of one of those forces outside reason which, more than reason, go to the making of man. Could we indeed read to the bottom the secret of man's pilgrimages, we should have gone far into the entire riddle of himself and his world.

The secret is one chiefly of the soul, but not the soul only. When a spot has become sacred to men it is always in the first place because a great spirit has dwelt there. But another arresting feature is the way in which, in the making of a "holy place," the outside matter, the physical surrounding,

has acted as a kind of reflex of this soul, one might say an absorbent of it ; such that, by dwelling in the place, the saint or hero has saturated it with his personality, as though emanations from his central self had poured into this house he dwelt in, into these fields and hills his eye looked upon. There seems a subtle giving off of the soul, a passing of its essence into its immediate surroundings ; a process which might be compared to that outrush of electrons from the atom which, as science is now showing us, is one of the forms of radio-activity.

This subtle reaction of mind and matter, be it observed, extends over the whole area of mental life. Every feeling in us, our innermost heart-beat, is held and reflected by the outside that envelops us. A violin played on by a master acquires a new value. The music has got into the wood. The soul's music, in all its kinds, from sadness to exultation, in like manner vibrates through its physical surroundings. Has a tragedy happened in the house ? The building becomes henceforth itself tragic. The shadow in the souls that sinned or suffered there glooms on the walls for ever. With what weird power has Philip Marston put this for us in his picture of the haunted house !

Must this not be, that one then dwelling here,
Where one man and his sorrows dwelt so long,
Shall feel the pressure of a ghostly throng,
And shall upon some desolate midnight hear
A sound more sad than is the pine-trees' song,
And thrill with great inexplicable fear ?

Compare with this the emotion of the exile who, after forty years' absence at the world's far end,

comes back to the old English homestead where he was born ! The timbers, the grey stones, commonplace to other wayfarers, shine upon him with a spiritual radiance ; they have a voice which goes to his heart. The soul of the past is there enshrined ; here, preserved for him in doorway, gable and ingle nook are a thousand precious memories. The essence of his early years—of loved faces that are gone and voices that are silent—distils into his heart. For him, as long as it stands, a dear and holy place ; holy, because the rude material of it has become saturate with soul.

This intimate partnership of world and spirit shows itself in the most diverse forms. We observe, for example, how the peculiar quality of a dominating personality colours for us the whole impression of a landscape. Each country has its own style of haunting. Its presiding genius has each his peculiar spell, and we see through his eyes. Why does the Lake Country impress us so differently from the scenery of the Border and of the Highlands ? It is not the contour of the hills or the colour of the skies. It is that the region is under a different inspiration. Grasmere and Langdale we find possessing us with the calm cult of Nature, and of the presence that is behind Nature, with “ the sense of something subtly interfused.” We are dreamy, contemplative, introspective. And we know the reason. It is because a spirit of this kind has been before us, and laid his spell upon the land. We are in the Wordsworth country. But at Loch Katrine or under Ben Ledi our mood is all warlike and romantic. The heart dances to the tune of the

old chivalries. The mountains, the valleys seem made for that, and to give this as their message. Again, a clear case of spiritual penetration and possession. This is the land of romance, because the soul of Sir Walter, its poet and lover, was the home of romance.

It is precisely this sense of a special quality of soul that gives the peculiar flavour of feeling with which we come to spots that in the stricter sense we call "holy." Art, philosophy, romance, exhale, as we have seen, their own particular virtue. But their charm is not that of religion, of the spirit's loftiest exercise. This has a thrill of its own, untranslatable into any other. Olivet and Assisi have a different aroma from that of the Parthenon or the Louvre. At Oxford you have one grade of pleasure in the Bodleian, another at the Martyrs' Memorial, or looking up at the window at Lincoln College behind which Wesley and the "Holy Club" met for study and prayer. So remote is this consciousness from æstheticism, from the cult of the physically beautiful, that the attempt so often made to produce the one from the other is always a failure. Rome is, perhaps, the best example of what we mean. St. Peter's charms the one sense, but leaves the other untouched. The pilgrims to Rome have found it at once the centre of art and the negation of faith. So was it with Petrarch, who names it Babylon; with Luther, whom it made a Protestant; with Goethe, who left it filled with anti-Catholic rage, to write the "Venetian Epigrams." What we want for our "holy place" is not architecture, but the first simplicity. The high rapture we seek

would come to us, not under gilded domes, but at the spot, could we find it, where Paul lodged and taught in his chains. We should love to light on the nook of which Justin Martyr writes: "I am lodging with a man called Martin, above the Timothine Baths," the house where, he says, the little Christian band met for worship; and that spot, could we hit on it, in Smyrna, of which Irenæus speaks: "I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, . . . and his conversations with the people and his familiar intercourse with John, . . . as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord."

It is this speciality of the religious sense, this struggle which it wages for a pure, unadulterated manifestation, that has given rise to Puritanism, to those bare simplicities of worship so offensive to art, but so mighty for life. It is the cry for immediacy of access of spirit to spirit which would have no distraction of the outward in its high intercourse. Jacob's rude block at Bethel was better as a Divine remembrancer than a garish temple. Here is why simple souls have found their bare meeting-house more sacred than cathedral altar. They know it as the place where the heart has reached its deepest and highest, where the soul has found its utmost wealth of inner experience. The uncushioned pew, the rude bench, have been to them the Damascus road where the vision came, their Milan garden where, like Augustine, they heard the inner voice that shaped their destiny. By the

Spirit's thrill, most august of consecrations, the lowly place has become holy ground.

Every thinking man, in his progress through life, has his elect spots, unnoted of others, which are shrines to him. Poor indeed is our home if there be not some quiet chamber in it, whose windows open toward Jerusalem. There is a corner, a chair, a bedside, whence the soul has found passage-way upward, and where secret strengths have flowed in on it, as from uttermost heights. Often these places are the unlikeliest of all. Prison floors, the bottommost abyss of outward affliction, are by the soul's magic turned into altars. A victim of the earthquake at Valparaiso, in a letter to the present writer, describes how, thrust by the disaster, with his family, from a comfortable home, upon the bare hillside, with no shelter from the bitter cold, he found, in the four nights thus spent, a sense which he would never after forget of the Divine presence and love. To sincere hearts each year makes the world richer in these sanctities. One becomes almost superstitious about them. There is a certain spot in one of the most crowded streets of London, where the present writer has, in passing, had time after time such sudden rush of happy thought as to make him wonder whether hidden behind the brickwork there be not some ministering sprite, some mystic fount of inspiration.

But as our view enlarges, the visible world itself, apart from this or that spot in it, acquires a consecration of its own. We apprehend another side to it. At every point it gives hints of a meaning, a reality behind, infinitely greater than appears.

The old paganism which peopled every hill and stream with its genius or unseen guardian was but the crude expression of what humanity has everywhere instinctively divined, that matter was imbedded in spirit; that the outward was but the symbol of an inward. All lustrations, baptisms, eating of bread, drinking of wine—sacraments incorporated into Christianity from usages old as the world—mean the same thing. We partake of our sacrament wherever we discern and reverence the invisible in our use and enjoyment of the visible. Our sense of the earth's beauty becomes then an act of religion. We survey its glory in the spirit of Augustine, with his "Wrangle who pleases, I will wonder." The sougning of the woods, "the ancient everlasting song of brooks and streams," sound in our ears as voices in a temple, the snowy mountains are our vision of the eternal throne.

All that has here been said, leads, it will be perceived, in one direction and centres in one result. The ultimate "holy place" is always a soul. The wide earth is consecrated by the universal soul that is in it. Each elect spot has acquired its virtue from some pure spirit that has there shed its light and power. There is no sanctity of buildings, of shrines, of rites or relics, but is the reflection from an inner life. One wonders, amid the rush of modern civilisation, whether, considering its aims and tendencies, it is capable of adding to the holy places of the early world; whether Chicago or New York will ever be centres of pilgrimages? That will come under only one condition—a condition not too

apparent just now—that souls grow there of such quality and reach to such heights as shall enable them, as of old, effectually to lighten, warm, and purify the world. The modern man needs to utter with a new intensity the prayer in the Phaedrus :
‘ Grant me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outward and inward man be at one.’”

XXX

Renewals

LIFE contains a law of renewals which is worth more study than seems to have been given to it. It meets us at every turn, this law, impressing itself on everything we see and everything we do. It is so familiar that we are apt to overlook its subtlety, and the wonderful implications that lie in it. Renewal contains for one thing the element of repetition, which itself is something to reflect upon. How strange when we think of it, this law of iteration on which our world is constructed! We could imagine it as so far otherwise; a world where every fresh morning and every fresh deed were radically different from every other morning and deed. But the sun comes punctually to his hour. Water, air, fire meet us to-day with the same qualities as they did yesterday. A great mass of our own doings are a round of repetitions. How much of our years have been spent in getting into and out of our clothes; in eating our three or four meals a day; in turning into bed and sleeping there; in performing the same daily journey, in doing the same work! Sameness, to this degree, is, to be sure, no mere arbitrary custom. It is a law of life which has more in it than at present we know.

But if we observe closely we discover in this round of things something more than repetition. Quietly, unostentatiously—so quietly that her sleight-of-hand is apt to go unnoted—Nature slips into the process her touch of the new. When we have watched long enough we see that her round is not, after all, a circular one. It is a spiral. To change the illustration, we may say that into her music, which begins with the simplest air, come incessant variations, growing always in fulness and complexity. Take natural history as a story of her renewals. In the animal series, from the ascidian up to man, she gives you at every stage the same principle with a fresh application. Her economies are marvellous. She is ever cutting her old clothes to new patterns. A man's hand is just the fore-foot of a horse with a cunning twist given to it. The body of a child before birth takes on in succession all the typical forms from the humblest to this human highest. It is an object-lesson giving in epitome the slow process of the ages. The history of forms is a history of renewals ; renewals that are climbing always upwards towards some far-off summit.

It is, however, when we come to the inner, conscious life that we reach the vital lessons of our theme. Renewal which works in this way in the outer world is, we perceive, operating with no less certainty in the spiritual realm. The history of religion, as it opens to the modern eye, is telling us a story of renewals that is of utmost consequence to faith. Here again, is the eternal music, beginning with the simple air, into which are constantly woven new

and mightier harmonies. Tindal's "Christianity as old as the Creation" was, as a title, by no means so wide of the mark as seemed to his orthodox contemporaries. Augustine, in a memorable passage, had said precisely the same thing. The best religion we have to-day has been in humanity in germ all along. How significant that remark made by the Indians to the missionary Eliot: "Their forefathers did know God, but after this they fell into a deep sleep, and when they did awake they quite forgot Him." The religious history of Egypt, of Babylonia, of India and China, as we are now learning it, shows humanity as from the beginning possessed by the same religious aspirations, moving under the same religious impulse, waiting for and opening their minds to the same drip of revelation.

That is the start of the music. But observe how it proceeds. One of the most salient examples of our law of renewal in religion is that given in the history of revivals. We know the religious revival as a period of high spiritual excitement, when multitudes of men come under a mysterious psychic influence, and when striking results are obtained in the region of the moral life. No instructed person, whatever his standpoint, and whatever he makes of them, can help accepting revivals as a fact, a part of the world-process in humanity. But here comes the point. As the years roll on these phenomena are renewed; but the renewal is never the same thing. There is always to be noted in them a move forward. To take an instance. Phrygia, in pagan times, was noted for its religious excitements. The inhabitants, in their worship of

Cybele, gave themselves up to extravagant, mystical frenzies. Later, under Christianity, Phrygia became the centre of the Montanism of the second century. The old emotional furore was renewed. Artisans, women preachers, claiming a special inspiration, stirred the multitudes to intensest religious passion. The enthusiasms, gesticulations, prostrations, reminded observers of the Corybantic orgies of the earlier days. But, with all its excesses, how far in advance was the Montanist revival over these predecessors? Into the old passion and fervour a new element had come, while a mass of coarser ingredients had been drained away. Of every revival that has happened since in Christendom a similar thing might be said. The mighty stirrings of the thirteenth century, out of which the begging Orders arose, were an enormous gain upon the corruption that preceded; but how inferior in the outlook they offered to the revival of the Reformation! Methodism was born in a revival, a movement of magnificent moral vigour, but with vast gaps on its intellectual side.

To-day we are in the midst of a new, and to many an apparently alien, movement. Instead of these enthusiasms we have, ruling over wide and influential classes of society, the scientific and critical spirit. There has been an enormous process of negation, of weeding out, of mental reconstruction. And the soul has had to pay for this by a temporary loss of feeling. It has seemed at times as if the old devotion, the old ecstasy of the religious life, were gone beyond recall. Mr. Morley, in his "Compromise," says of our day: "Religion, whatever destinies may

be in store for it, is at least for the present hardly any longer an organic power. It is not that supreme, penetrative, controlling, decisive part of a man's life which it has been and will be again." The passage is a prophecy. "And will be again." Assuredly we may trust here Nature's principle of renewals. What she once sets going she never again loses sight of. The air recurs, in higher key, sweeter, with divine variations. What has been taking place in religion might be compared to a spiral movement round a mountain towards its summit. The path, in its winding, leads at times quite away from the prospect. But it always comes back to it, and at every fresh turn the scene is given us from a higher standpoint and over a vaster realm. There is no conflict between science and religion. What is going on is this combined upward movement of the two forces. And the next great revival will show the result. It will be as high above the earlier ones in the quality of its contents as Montanism was high above its Phrygian predecessors. All the music will be in this renewal. Everything that enters into the religious life and constitutes its value—its unspeakable delight of feeling, its vision of God, its moral victory, its triumph of love—will be there, and this conjoined with an intellectual wealth that immeasurably heightens the feeling, while providing for it an immutable foundation. We repeat, there are no leakages in the spiritual order. Not one atom of religion that has come into this world will ever be lost out of it. Nature's law of renewal is here our sure charter of faith.

"Is this the inevitable world-movement?" cries

some one. "Then let it go on. We need not trouble ourselves further about it." That would be the worst of constructions and the falsest of inferences. The world-movement is *our* movement. It is the divine impulse that stirs in *us* and that it were highest treason to disobey. As Dr. Gore has well said, "When the best men stop trying the world sinks back like lead." And here it is that the topic becomes immediately personal. The higher renewals in the life of the nation and the Church depend on the renewals in our own life. To lose from ourselves the power of securing them were to lose everything. That power is accordingly, above all others, one to be kept and reinforced. In order to do this we need to know the sources and allies of renewal, and to keep in touch with them. One of the most potent of these is the law of association. We all know the way in which a note of music or the scent of a flower will at times set all our being in a flame. There is a Middlesex country lane known to the writer where the scent of a bush of sweet-briar has time and again sent him back with a rush upon his boyhood's days—to an old garden which had, too, its bush of sweet-briar, and so to recollections which revoke the years and make him a boy again.

It is on this principle of association, solidly laid in the deeps of us, that religion founds some of its most potent forces. It is a spring of renewal. Through something outward, that appeals to the senses, we are carried, as in a flash, to our utmost inward. As Walter Pater puts it: "Religious sentiment. . . has always had much to do

with localities, with the thoughts that attach themselves to actual scenes and places." The spiritual life, wherever it has been greatly lived, seems to exhale its perfume on the material things it has had contact with, and to sweeten them for ever. In one way or another we all admit the sanctity of the relic. The tomb of a loved one, to a high soul, is always a place of spiritual renewal.

It is because of our need to keep in good order, and at its full working power, our apparatus of renewal that we see the permanent use of religious observance and worship. We go to it not to hear the latest news, but for inward refreshing. Often enough the place of meeting is itself our channel of inspiration. The consecration of a church building lies not in any ecclesiastical formula uttered over it. Its sacredness comes from the "heart-work" that has gone on in it. Where the purposes for which the structure has been reared are truly realised the worshipper feels that something mystic has happened to its very materials. Like a violin in the hands of a great player, "the music has got into the wood." Modest conventicles, without pretension to external beauty, become in this way veritable shrines. Humble souls go there as to a spiritual rendezvous. Before word is spoken we are often in the case of good Alexandrian Philo, who, as he says, from being empty, "suddenly became full, ideas being in an invisible manner showered upon him and implanted in him from on high."

There are few things, we repeat, more worth safeguarding than our power of renewal. Especially

in the higher things. Our personal life should, in this matter, follow the order we have observed in the world's wider history. The love of man and woman, of husband and wife, for instance, if it accept God's order, will know the renewal which is always a higher form. Cardinal Bembo, in the sixteenth century, argued that "knowledge how to love comes only in ripe manhood, that only the old really have it, and their skill lies in eluding the impulse of the senses, in fleeing from all that is vulgar." The worthy Cardinal has somewhat overlaboured his point, but the contention has in it a certain element of truth. What it is safe to say, and most important for us to remember, is that sexual love comes to us first as a raw material which needs refining. And where a wholesome spiritual process is going on within we shall find—as in the wider spheres we have noticed—a constant upward trend in our love. It will carry more things in it than of old; have a larger outlook; be more deeply and mystically based.

A theme like this lends itself inevitably to optimism. Indeed, have we business with anything else in such a world as ours, with such laws underlying it? If our conditions are healthy we shall be, as Maeterlinck has it, "born afresh every morning, to a world that for ever awakens to the future." That future! What has gone is only a rough preliminary to it. Life has hitherto been simply collecting its materials, sharpening its tools, preparing the arena for its glorious development. Already beyond the horizon we see lifting itself the time of which the prophets spoke; towards which science and religion are

working ; for which man's widening capacity makes ready. " Will it never come," cries Lessing, " that age of light and purity of heart ? Never ? Let me not entertain the doubt. Surely there will some day be reached that Eternal Gospel promised in the New Testament."

Yes, assuredly it will come. If the world-processes we have been studying mean anything they mean that. The powers that have been started in the earth and in the soul never leave off. Their way is towards ever larger fulfilments. It was that vision of the future surely that inspired Milton's great apostrophe, on whose high note we may well conclude : " Come forth, out of Thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the kings of the earth ! Put on the visible robes of Thy imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which Thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed Thee ; for now the voice of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."

On Being Ill

THERE is a lively passage in Emerson in which he exhorts us, by all that is sacred, never to talk of our ailments. In vain. The topic is as perennial as the weather. There are circles in which nothing is more popular. It is the surest way to the hearts of elderly ladies to be a good listener on this, their most engrossing theme. And, *pace* Emerson, the subject is distinctly worth handling in its season. It draws upon all the requisites of eloquence, for it is rooted in experience and charged with feeling. And we are in good company in discussing it. Literature has handled the topic in all sorts of humours, and in every one of them has contrived to be interesting. How we enjoy that story in Aristotle, so pat to our own time, of Herodicus the training master, who, falling into ill-health, invented thereupon a *régime* of gymnastics so complex and severe as speedily to work and worry himself and a number of his pupils to death! Plato also is distinctly suggestive reading for the invalid when he speaks of that pleasant practice of physicians of his time who “received money from the relatives of the sick man. or from some

enemy of his, and forthwith put him out of the way ! ”

Where is there a more entertaining book than old Burton's "Anatomy" ! But it is all of ailments, physical, mental and moral. We feel a new interest in Bacon when he tells us he was "always puddering with physic." We prefer Richard Baxter's account of his diseases to much of his theology. How the picture of Knox holds us where, old and infirm, he is described as tottering half-fainting into the pulpit ; but, once set going there, rising to such energy as though "ready to ding the pulpit into blads ere he left it." The laugh of Voltaire, his trick of treating everything *en badinant*, takes on a new and almost heroic aspect when we read of his perpetual invalidism—*toujours allant et souffrant*. "Ivanhoe" becomes to us an even more wonderful tale when we remember that Scott wrote it in the midst of racking pain. We are thankful for Charles Lamb's invalidism, for we could not have spared his essay on "Convalescence." The Fathers—to go back on our track here—are, in their handling of theological themes, often incredibly stodgy. We own to a feeling of relief when, in turning their pages, we light on a passage like the following. It is the good Basil who calls to us out of his Cappadocian diocese and out of his fourth century : "I have been fifty days ill, hardly able to turn in bed, quite crushed with pain. I am trying all this month the hot-water cure." Here, at least, out of the Babel of theological hair-splittings of that distracted age we have something human that we can understand and sympathise with !

We are interested in illness, where it is intelligently observed and discoursed of, because, for one thing, it offers us life from a new aspect. In health we are, most of us, part of a machine, which occupies our whole attention, and whose noisy revolution makes all else inaudible. In illness all this is changed. We have become spectators instead of actors. The position offers some salutary if surprising discoveries. The first is that the great world rolls on without us. A kindly world on the whole, which has welcomed us, allowed us a footing in it, given us board and lodging, but which now makes plainer to us than ever before that it was here before we came, and will be there, and none the worse, when we are gone. We get a wholesome sense of our relative insignificance. We see the amusing folly of the fly on the wheel in giving itself airs, as though it turned the axle. It is worth being ill if only to get a real grip of that unflattering but most wholesome truth.

There are other things also which, at such times, become very plain to us. We are met, for instance, with the question of the apparent waste of power which illness entails. Why cannot we always be in complete possession of ourselves, of our maximum? One would think a universe so full of every kind of force could have spared us a little more! How little more would have kept us swinging along our path of progress, without these halts and down-fallings and exasperating delays! Think of the power there is in things: the sweep of a star, the force of a Niagara, the adamant strength of a Mont Blanc! All this outside us, vaunting its un-

tiring everlastingness, while within we are conscious only of tottering invalidisms, of nerves so scant of life! Shall we never catch this secret of the mountains and the seas? Is their health set as a mock to our ill-health?

This question, of course, does not come home to all of us with equal force. There are people who never know what it is to be ill, just as others never know what it is to be well. And the tendency of things is, let us hope, to more strength and to less invalidism. Nature takes pains to show that weakness and suffering are not her first intentions concerning us. We are on the track of our ailments, and see from what preventible causes many of them have sprung. There is that unknown ancestor of ours whose excesses saddled his descendants, ourselves included, with perhaps a whole family of diseases. We should so like to have a word with that gentleman! But not to be too hard upon him. For aught we know his excess lay in being too moral instead of not moral enough. Perhaps he was an ascetic who starved himself on principle, or a student who burnt too much midnight oil, or a philanthropist who tainted his blood by visiting fever-haunted hovels. Probably he was quite other than that, but give him at least the benefit of the doubt. However it be, the way our human destinies, in the matter of body and brain, have been fixed for us by the doings of our forbears, without our having a say in the matter, gives one curious reflections. We talk of a Divine judgment to follow this life. But is there not room also for a human judgment; for a meeting with those others whose follies or whose

wisdoms have so largely fashioned us, and for a general settling of accounts with them? We think of a good many things we would like to say to our ancestors, and our descendants will probably have as many to say to us.

But this is a digression, and we come back to the point. It is assuredly not the doings, good or bad, of our ancestors; not any succession of fore-going slips or mischances, that offers the final account of our human weakness. The difference between us and Mont Blanc in point of robustness is not explained that way. Our fragility is plainly an arranged affair. If mere strength, the force that defies the years and that makes what we call our successes, had been the one end Nature sought in us, things be sure would have been ordered differently. With all that force of the universe behind her, it would have been the easiest thing in the world to give us that. But life's ends are deeper and subtler. What we call our weakness is, it is evident, a machinery working for results that are beyond the compass of a Mont Blanc or a Niagara. There are, it seems, other strengths than that of radium or gravitation. When we look into it we discover, indeed, that it is precisely out of this under side of life, out of its fragility, its helplessness, its decay, its death, that our soul has been made. It is here, and nowhere else, that man found his trust, his tenderness, his sympathy, his resignation, his feeling of dependence, the vision and sense of the Unseen, the things in short that make him a spiritual being. We may listen here to poor Oscar Wilde: "If the world has been built of sorrow it has been

built by the hands of love, because in no other way could the soul of man, for whom the world was made, reach the full stature of perfection." Clough, who knew ill-health and an early decay, had the same assurance :

. . . Yet how little thou canst tell
 How much in thee is ill or well :
 Nor for thy neighbours, nor for thee,
 Be sure was life designed to be
 A draught of dull complacency.

In a severe illness, when the life-force ebbs to a low point, Nature rehearses the final scene for us, and shows us how easy a thing it will be to die. A healthy nature, that enjoys living, will, when the time comes, enjoy dying. We recognise it as part of the general scheme ; a kindly scheme, which does not cease to be kind in this final incident. We see with Browne in his " *Religio Medici*," that " we are happier with death than we should have been without it." Death is, in fact, a trump card which Nature holds for us, and which she will play in our interest at the right moment. And this conviction comes upon us without any complications from theology. Illness is non-theological. The sick man knows, if no one else does, that the most heated disputes in this sphere have little or no contact with reality ; that they are a logomachy with which he need not trouble himself. Nature is not much of an ecclesiastic. She brought us into the world in her own homely fashion, without formulæ, and will take us out of it under similar conditions. All the same, she is not mocker, nor atheist. The space she

clears for us from the Church controversies leaves the more room for religion. In these hours of seclusion, shut off from the roaring world, we find ourselves in communion with the ultimate realities. We are in love with the heights. We find our kinship with all who have loved, who have aspired, who have suffered. Familiar words from the great souls who have known God come back to us with an altogether ravishing sweetness. Our soul dwells in Holy Land. We walk in Galilee and hear the Beatitudes; we are admitted to Gethsemane; we learn the secret of Calvary. We know all this not simply as history written in a book, but as the human history that is written in our own spirit. Here is the road that souls have travelled from the beginning of the world, and where they have found victory.

The illnesses which we write or talk about are illnesses from which we recover. The other sort lie to be described elsewhere and in another language. But it is for most a happy experience to come back again from that weird by-path where we have spent the painful weeks, and to find ourselves once more amid the joyous bustle of the main route. Whence, by what mysterious processes does it come to us, this returning strength? From rest and from movement, from the spring breath, from wind and sun, it streams in upon us. Day by day the perspective changes. The old interests, the old preoccupations revive and resume their sway. We are becoming once more politicians, controversialists, shareholders, sportsmen, and the hundred other things that made up the old life. The world which has shown how easily it can do without us gives us,

nevertheless, a good-humoured welcome back. Best of all, it shows us the niche where we can still do some of its work. Well will it be for us if, as we tread the old route, we can diligently and lodge safe in our memories the signs written in the earth and sky of that other bit of country we have been passing through. A sorry thing if, after that experience, we remain still without a sense of the true proportion of things ; if we have not learned to estimate all the world offers at its proper value ; if we have not with Chalmers, after the illness which changed his life, been made to perceive the “ little-ness of time and the greatness of eternity.”

Character and Reputation

OUR character is what we are ; our reputation is what other people think we are. A good deal of history, a large part of life's whole tragi-comedy, is made up of our several endeavours to produce some kind of workable equation between these two quantities. Our inner fact and our outer appearance ! Incessant and most subtle is the interplay of these two ; some of it conscious, much of it unconscious ; all of it vital to our growth upward or downward. The study of the relation here set up is not always a pleasant one ; it may lead easily to cynicism. Yet it is one that not the philosopher only, but every man who cares for his own inward health needs in some fashion or other to undertake. There are a dozen different ways of approach. Perhaps the best for us to follow will be the one which comes closest to our own practical life.

We have already indicated what we mean by character. But more must now be offered than that too brief definition. It is easy to say "character is what we are" ; but then, what *are* we ? Who shall judge ? We remember the sprightly handling of this problem in the " Autocrat of the Breakfast

Table," where "the young man named John" is made out to be several individuals, according as he is viewed from within, from around, or from above. Do we know ourselves as we are? Does anybody know us? Could Infinity take any such measure of us as would be compatible with our own finite view? What, too, of the moral scale according to which we measure? Humanity has not yet hit on virtue's common denominator. There are Indian tribes where the women will not accept the suitor who has not killed his man. The Thug is doubtless as punctilious as we are on the point of character, but we do not understand his ethics of murder. People mix up things in the strangest way. How bewildering it is for us to read that calm deliverance of Mahomet: "Two things of the world have an attraction for me, women and perfumes; but I only find pure happiness in prayer." We have a similar sensation when in contact with some of the roystering spirits of the Renaissance—a Benvenuto Cellini, for instance—where you have Catholic devotion, prayer, study of the Scriptures on one page, and a seduction or an assassination on the next, and all recounted with the same gusto and sense of approval. We come away from studies of this sort with a confused notion that man is half-a-dozen different things, his life pointing, as it seems, at the same time, in exactly opposite directions.

There is a school of moralists and *littérateurs* who have erected all this into a doctrine. Flaubert is at the head of a French group who paint character and passion without any attempt at criticism. The thing is so; delineate it as it is; that is all. The

encyclopædists, at an earlier period, worked on the same lines. Says Helvetius : " All men are what they must be, therefore all hatred against them is unjust. A fool produces follies just as a wild shrub produces sour berries, and to insult him is to reproach the oak for bearing acorns instead of olives." The same idea evidently was in the mind of Rousseau when he wrote his " Confessions." He gives us there the most revolting details without a hint of self-blame, describing his book as " a piece of comparison for the study of the human heart," and taking pride in its uniqueness. " Et c'est la seule qui existe." He was right there. There has been nothing like it before or since.

But these confusions are, after all, more apparent than real. Taking human history as a whole, we have sufficient evidence that, despite the stragglers and stragglings, " a God orders the march." In all hearts, however varied their present standards, there is a sense of better and worse. And the knowledge of what really *is* better is steadily growing. The human consciousness is homogeneous, and the inspirations that reach its uppermost surface will in the end pervade the whole. Restricting our view here to modern Christendom, what we have reached is a moral standard whose validity is recognised by all classes, by those who transgress it not less than by those who observe it. The all-pervading influence of that standard is seen in our rich and subtly graded vocabulary of praise and blame. The average man has a working rule for his daily use, in itself a curious enough amalgam. But it is not his only rule. Beyond it, brought into

action for his abstract judgments, is a more spiritual code, shining down as from a high transcendent background. He recognises the rare natures, the spiritual possibilities realised in some lives, and all this comes into his standard of judging. The level he has himself reached, and that higher one discerned in the distance, unite to throw into relief the abyss into which the social transgressor may fall. Hell is still a working English word. It is none too strong for the punishment meted out by society to people who break through, or fail to live up to, the accepted moral law.

Hence, in modern civilisation, we have the curious spectacle of a subsidiary morality, the morality not so much of character as of reputation. It is practised by people who, without the instinct of goodness, have fully developed the instinct of self-preservation. They have no love for the abyss though they are closely akin to the unfortunates who have got there. They claim the awards of respectability while secretly violating its laws. They live "the double life." A large part of their daily business is the business of concealment, of evasion. Not that concealment is, in itself, necessarily discreditable. Every man conceals a large part of his life. There are functions of it which are not for his neighbour's eye. There is an innocent dissimulation also which we borrow from mother Nature—herself the most arrant of dissimulators. The honest man's face, as well as the rascal's, is at times a mask. He needs on occasion to cover up his soul, and is glad of the screen that has been furnished him. But the difference between him

and this other is that, were his veil torn aside, the result would be at worst a hurt to his feelings, while in the other the result is ruin. There are more people in this latter case to-day than one likes to think of. Their problem is not how to avoid wrong, but how to avoid being found out. The men who are "doing time" at this moment at Dartmoor or Portland have outside a great host of counterparts, who are at large simply because they have been luckier or cleverer in their concealments than their brother criminals under lock and key.

When we study the career of men in this position we discern one of the sinister relations between character and reputation. Swindlers begin with a basis of character. The "religious rogue," who appears with such appalling regularity in our modern commercial annals, starts usually as genuinely religious. His zeal combines with his business aptitude to secure him a vogue amongst his fellow believers. As his ventures prosper his ambitions enlarge, while his spiritual fervour declines. But that early devotion, he discovers, now figures as a valuable business asset, on which he can trade. It no longer represents his character, but it is still his reputation, and he works that for all it is worth. He patronises religious institutions, though religious beliefs no longer sway his conduct. There is no more dangerous man in society, and the Anglo-Saxon, with his mixture of religion and business, is rapidly producing him on two continents. Laurence Oliphant said of the financial crash in New York in 1873 "there is scarcely an instance of a prominent fraudulent bankrupt who has not made a show of

piety the mask under which he ensnared his victims." Recent history, both in America and nearer home, has added further illustrations, quite as deeply shaded, of the same theme.

We have here, we say, a sinister and disastrous relation between character and reputation, the lessons and menace of which need, with sternest insistence, to be dealt with by the preacher and the moralist of to-day. But this happily is not the only nexus between the two. In other directions character and reputation work harmoniously and to great results. Reputation, to look at it from a new aspect, is a man's past. It is the thing he was and the work he did in years that are gone. The world has come to know that past and connects it, with all of worth that was there, with the living man now before it. And here a great law of values comes in. The man who has done solid work finds himself worth what he is to-day *plus* all he did yesterday. The artist, the writer, the preacher, the politician, as he steps out this morning before the world, finds the thing he is doing judged in a light of its own—the light that his past has created. It is one of the high rewards of later life, where the fight has been a good one, to realise this driving power behind us. That section of our life, flung off as it were from our personality, freed from all ailments and limitations of the present, has become as it were our immortal part, and works for us with tireless energy both when we sleep and when we wake.

The track we have followed has, it will be seen, all the time kept us in view of one fact, that reputation,

at however far a remove, is always ultimately related to character, in a way based upon it. The danger of our time, even amongst the best men, is however that of striving for reputation even more than for character. The rewards of good repute are so great, the avenues to it, in an advertising and limelight age are so many, that insensibly a man is led to think of his pose before the public, rather than of himself and his deed as before God. How good here is that word of the "Imitation": "No man doth safely appear abroad but he who gladly hideth himself. No man doth safely speak but he that willingly holdeth his peace. No man doth safely rule but he that is willingly in subjection."

A word remains to be said on what is the basis of this whole theme—character itself. Can we create character, or hold it in any way under our own control? It is the master dilemma, in which life and logic seem eternally at war. If the necessarians are right all our moral vocabulary is a delusion. Why blame a man for what he cannot help? But the vocabulary is there, with all it means. And all the fatalist theorisings of a thousand years have not shifted it by a hair's breadth. The logic of life here is, in fact, deeper than our own. Its freedom and its necessity work at a depth beyond our ken. Assuredly the best freedom we know is that Divine necessity inherent in the quality of a pure soul which forbids it to go wrong. The working of that inner power is the secret of religion. The doctrine of it, permanent amid all outward change, is that a man wins his fight by linking himself to a Something, a Someone higher, in whom his being

completes itself. As Carlyle put it of the Puritans : “ It is a fruitful kind of study, that of men who do in very deed understand and feel at all moments that they are in contact with God, that the right and wrong of their little life has extended itself into Eternity and Infinity. It is, at bottom, my religion too.”

To men of this quality the relation of character to reputation becomes quite simple. They think everything of the first and next to nothing of the second. Their vision of reality is so clear that they have little enough care for illusions. Popularity, the opinion of the moment, the assent of the current orthodoxy, what are these ? To get one's piece of work done in this world, to find the truth and say it, though the utterance lead to Gethsemane and the Cross—this is the concern of the world's great souls. And when they have passed, and men catch at last the actual meaning of their life, they bow themselves over the print of what they now discern to be Divine footsteps. They know that once more “ God hath visited His people.”

XXXIII

Old and New

TIME is our supreme mystery, a thing invisible, intangible, inexpressible, and yet to each one of us the intensest of realities. We cannot analyse a moment. No philosopher has solved the problem of "now." We believe in the present, but can never catch it. As you try to think it, it is either gone or yet to be. Time, which weaves itself incessantly into our life, that connects itself with our every act, never shows us its face. So mystic this being of ours, where the great forces that weave it are for ever invisible !

Let us trace some of the relations which time creates for us, and notably those of past and present, of old and new. It is of the first importance in life, and especially in the religious life, to strike a true balance here. There is, however, in this matter to be noted a broad temperamental difference between men which curiously affects their judgments. There are those who think the past of little account, who are all for a clean slate and a fresh start. They are of the mind of Toland, who regarded the Fathers as of no authority ; " who thought as little of becoming a rule of faith to their posterity as we to

our own"; or of Camille Desmoulius, who considered the dead done with, and that the living and not these vanished ones should give the law of the future. On the other hand, we see men—and great ones—whose gaze is instinctively backwards. Lamb, in his love of the past, says, "I cannot make these present times present to me." Newman, in the age of science and Darwin, lives and teaches as though all the modern knowledge were of no account. He has, it is true, a theory of development, but it is one that leads in exactly the opposite direction from all the modern tendencies. Clearly one of the first things we have to do in estimating the value of a man's teaching is to examine his time-sense—the temperamental prepossessions in relation to past versus present which he brings to his study of facts.

What, then, is the true attitude to the past? Note, first of all, that we cannot get away from it if we would. A freshly-born child is the newest of all facts. It is this birth of the young generations that compels the world forward. Yet observe how this new fact is shaped and ruled by the old. Before the young spirit can begin with its own special thought it must go to the past for all its tools. The language it uses, the thought-forms in which its growing intelligence expresses itself, have been shaped for it by those who have gone before. The entire atmosphere in which its mind lives is their creation. Every word in our vocabulary is a petrified mentality—a work of bygone thought. We live to-day in an ocean of mind, an ocean fed by countless streams of the myriad personalities who wrought

and felt before we came. And it is not only the past thought in which we live. It is also the past deed. What men did ages ago is shaping the fortunes of you and me just now. Gibbon was hardly extravagant in his statement that had Charles Martel failed to win his fight against the Arabs at Tours in the eighth century, we might now have had Mohammedan doctors teaching the faith of Islam at Oxford. The millions of Europe are at this hour influenced in a thousand ways by the issue of Waterloo. How different the France, the Germany, the Italy, the England of to-day had Napoleon won ! We are, it is evident, under a cosmic conservatism which permits no rash iconoclasms. The old never dies. Every scrap of it is used in the making of the new.

Let us now consider this new. That imperious law of things by which, as we have seen, we are bound to the old, compels us, under the same necessity, constantly to the new. It is useless to exclaim against novelties. The mind insists upon them. Let the greatest stickler for things as they are, addressing the most conservative audience in the world, continue, in pulpit or elsewhere, to give exactly the same views in exactly the same phrases, and he would bore his supporters to death. The mind, by its very structure, insists upon the new fact, the new presentation. Our moral constitution tells the same story. It is one of the surest maxims of morals that a mere practice of the old is the death of virtue. It is always in a pressing on from what we are to something beyond that goodness exists. As the ancient saying has it : " He who

ceases to be better ceases to be good." There is no standing still in ethic. It is upward or downward. "The innermost essence of morality," says Wundt, "is in ceaseless, never-ending effort." It is the same with religious experience. The most stringent orthodoxy is here at one with the widest liberalism. They are alike in their insistence that no man, in this sphere, can live on his past. That he had spiritual raptures, ecstasies, heaven's own assurances ten years ago, forms, they will unite in telling him, no sufficiency for to-day. Religious conservatism does not extend to living on yesterday's manna.

This inner compulsion to the new, derived from our mental and moral constitution, is, we further discover, in exact accord with our position in the universe. We stand on the border line of two realms, the known and the unknown. The first, vast as it may seem, is, as compared with the second, a mere speck of territory. We are like colonists encamped on the edge of a continent, who have explored a few miles here and there, leaving the immeasurable vastness behind as yet untouched. To beings made as we are there could not be a more fascinating position. It is one that stirs, and evidently was meant to stir, every faculty in us; that fires our whole nature with the desire to know. That continent of truth is frankly offered us for exploration. We are invited to go up and possess the land. We discern nowhere a warning against trespassers. And continually, as fresh discoveries are made there, as fresh treasure-trove of fact is brought in from its recesses, man perceives a corresponding

change in himself. As the universe grows larger to him he himself grows larger; the new facts are new forces which henceforth reside and work in him. For the central thing about humanity is that it is always in the making. From that territory of the unknown there is ever flowing in upon us the new fact, the new force that is fashioning us into something other and higher than we were.

We have no need to be afraid of the new. After all, it is but a relative term, a term which exhibits simply our limitations, our ignorance. The discoveries that have from time to time so startled our predecessor;—the Copernican astronomy that upset his ideas of heaven and earth; the geologic facts that destroyed his theory of creation; the Biblical studies that struck so on his views of inspiration and revelation, were only startling because of the kind of mind they fell upon. We are such naïve, raw, immature children of the universe. To higher intelligences these revolutionary tidings were the stalest of commonplaces. Our new facts are really as old as the world. God, be sure, knew them all along. The confusion they cause in us is just a process in our education. It is a knocking down preliminary to building us out on a greater scale. The universe will not cramp itself to meet our tiny dimensions. It is we who must grow to meet its size.

All nature is in a conspiracy to urge us to the new. As Plato says in the *Symposium*: “All men are bringing to birth in their bodies and in their souls.” And birth is the greatest of innovators. Men can-

not provide against revolutions so long as there is a child in arms.

A child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it and forward-looking thoughts.

Conservatism may build its creedwalls heaven high ; may fortify itself with Councils and with precedents. But unless it have truth on its side, creed and Council offer no defence against the new mind that is here. The fresh generation brings its own way of seeing, its own way of determining. And humanity, in the forward march to which it is thus compelled, finds no way backwards. It is on, and ever on. There is something awe-inspiring, as of the presence of manifest Divinity, in this constant mental action of the race. As in the body, where an unceasing process works whereby new material is added and the old carried away, so it is in the soul. Down in the depths of the general consciousness room is ever being made for the reception of fresh truths. No vacuum is permitted there. Behind the decay of an outworn belief we behold the fresh sprout of the larger conception which is to succeed.

It is the view of this regular, concerted movement that gives such a significance to history. Schopenhauer was never further from the point than when, in his contemptuous way, he speaks of history as a mere string of disconnected facts. The prophets of the race have never believed that. They have recognised history as the unrolling of a scheme. Whatever their view of a golden age behind, they have always discerned one in front. They have

known that "a God orders the march," and that the march is toward a Promised Land. That is the meaning of ideals—ideals which, as Fouillée puts it, "are but the deepest sense and anticipation of future reality." Yet, how slow the movement! The Leader plainly is not in a hurry. Our eyesight so far outruns our footwork. Long centuries ago Lucan in his "Pharsalia" predicted the time of universal peace, when, "with his weapons thrown aside, man should learn everywhere to love his fellow." What slaughters, hatings, deliriums of militarism since! Yet that reign of peace and brotherhood is as surely coming as is the rising of to-morrow's sun. There is no chance in the future. Chance is only another word for our ignorance. Could we only see far enough and clear enough the new heaven and new earth would be as visible to us as the stars on a cloudless night.

A theme like this is full of practical lessons. There is an outstanding one for the religious teacher. If he knows his ground he will see himself as for one thing, a constant mediator between the old and the new. He will never undervalue the old. He will in his treatment of it imitate Nature, which makes its new structures out of the old materials. Even where error has to be uprooted he will, as Condorcet so well puts it, act like the skilled architect who in destroying a building, "sets about its demolition in such a way as to prevent its fall from being dangerous." He will teach the young to reverence the past, and the aged to reverence the future. While accepting new forms of presentation where truth compels, he will show how the older form contained

in its own way the full religious reality. He will show how from one perishable vessel to another that Divine reality is in each age transferred, losing in the movement no atom of its priceless essence.

Believing this we find a further and final lesson, the lesson of our true attitude towards the future. It is that, surely, of victorious faith, and of the love that casteth out fear. We may say indeed with Thoreau that "nothing is so much to be feared as fear." With a sure hold on God we know nothing of accidents. If human observation and the long experience of the ages are good for anything they have proved beyond a doubt that we are in a world of spiritual law, a world where moral and inner values are the chief products, and where the whole tendency is toward their complete realisation and expression. We are in that movement, partakers of its glorious promise. To life's outer husk—our body, our circumstance—a thousand things may happen. But none of these can touch our centre. At utmost they can only drive us inward and closer to it. *Quis separabit?* Neither life nor death can bar us from the love of God.

XXXIV

Remainders

WE are apt to think ill of remainders. We regard them as the fag-ends and soiled stock of life, a refuse to be shovelled away or jobbed off at half-price. But there is no greater mistake. We want a new doctrine and practice of remainders. Life is full of them, and you might find almost the entire art of living on their proper management.

Remainders represent losses, subtractions. We could conceive of life as built on a plan which excluded such things ; which was a perpetual fullness, where all we had was secured to us, and where the only change was increase. But that is not how matters have been arranged. We are surrounded with what seem robber forces that ruthlessly snatch away our cherished possessions. We grow older, and each year sees a new depletion of our shrinking time-allowance. And with the years our powers weaken and leave us. The once President of the Alpine Club walks with a stick or takes to a Bath chair. Our friends one after another drop away. Age has been described as a losing game, and

certainly its losses are enormous. As Dryden so bitterly puts it :

Fool'd with hope men favour the deceit ;
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay ;
To-morrow's falser than the former day ;
Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possesst.
Strange cozenage !

We should not accept that as a fair description, for it takes no notice of the gains in the account. Cozenage is not the word. Life is rather a perpetual exchange. It is a ceaseless traffic, an eternal coming and going. And in this movement the problem set us all every morning is an equation between what is here and what is gone. Our life's victory or defeat will be found to depend to a quite extraordinary degree on our daily management of this last—our management, that is, of what is left.

It is by their handling of remainders that great men have best signalled their greatness. War is full of that story. It is when his forces have been decimated and their spirits broken by disaster that again and again the genius of a commander in handling his remnant has gloriously saved the situation. At Poitiers our Black Prince, with his handful of men, ragged, famished, weary with incessant marches, and hemmed in by a full-fed enemy five times their number, so managed his handful as to turn what seemed certain disaster into the most resounding of victories. For three-quarters of his career William of Orange was the head of a forlorn hope—forlornest of hopes, as it

seemed. But the end again was victory. At Marston Moor the day seemed altogether lost after the first round; the Parliament troops everywhere broken and fleeing, except in one direction, where stood Noll Cromwell and his Ironsides, calmly singing a psalm. That their comrades had given up the day as lost seemed to them no argument whatever, or if argument, then one only for more strenuous fighting. Here was a remainder that counted, as Rupert and his Cavaliers found to their cost. We think of Washington at Valley Forge; of Napoleon at Marengo, his troops three-parts beaten, and then, when all seemed over, winning with the remaining quarter. Later on it was the same story with his great rival at Waterloo. Was there ever a closer shave? The allies began by being utterly beaten and dispersed. Wellington's own story, as he gave it to gossip Creevey at Brussels, after the fight, is surely the briefest and raciest battle story extant. "It has been the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life. Blucher lost fourteen thousand men on Friday night, and got so d—y licked that I could not find him on Saturday morning." It was a remainder he fought with on the fateful day, with what result we know.

In our own lives we have a question day by day of personal remainders. What is the argument we hold with our losses? There is only one good way here—the way of concentrating on what is left. Nothing is nobler in history than the examples it offers of this form of courage. The spectacle of Fawcett, falling blind in his young manhood and determining that the affliction should not alter or

mains his career, living in spite of it the strenuous life, filling the hours with hard work and sunny play, rising to highest things in service and achievement, forms, to our thinking, one of the finest object-lessons the nineteenth century has to offer. We think, too, of that greater figure behind, the blind poet of the Commonwealth, strong in the same magnificent resolve :

Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope ; but still bear up and steer
Right onward

Surely there is nothing more pathetic in literature than the lines, in his "Second Defence of the English People," in which Milton defends himself against the abominable insinuation of Salmasius that his blindness was a Divine judgment for his sins. "I call Thee, O God, the searcher of hearts, to witness that I am not conscious either in the more early or in the later periods of my life of having committed any enormity which might deservedly have marked me out as fit subject for such a calamitous visitation. . . . When I was publicly solicited to write a reply to the Defence of the royal cause, when I had to contend with the pressure of sickness, and with the apprehension of soon losing the sight of my remaining eye, and when my medical attendants clearly announced, that if I did engage in the work it would be irreparably lost, their premonitions caused no hesitation and inspired no dismay. . . . My resolution was unshaken, though the alternative was either the loss of my sight or the desertion of my duty."

Here, indeed, is the great way of living, and it is open to us all. There are few severer tests than physical defect, but it is only small souls that sink under them. The large nature makes of them stepping-stones. It is, for instance, a reflection full of optimism to note how men of fewest inches, deprived of that element of power which comes from commanding stature, have, spite the lack, by sheer energy of mind, become the great swayers of destiny. What a tiny man was Lord John Russell! Yet he led the House of Commons, and was Prime Minister of England. Napoleon was almost a dwarf. Agesilaus and Alexander were under the middle height. In other regions of influence note Montaigne, Spenser, Barrow, Pope, Steele, Watts, Wesley, all meagre of body. How they bulk to-day in the world of thought and deed! Nor, when we are of the right temper, will the advance of years, with whatsoever physical shearings and loppings it may bring, put us off from the business of inner progress. Cato learned Greek at sixty; it was at the same age Robert Hall took up Italian, that he might read Dante. In his eightieth year Michael Angelo, walking in Rome, on being asked the reason of his expedition, replied, "That I may learn something."

But life has other problems for us than those of physical defect, problems where the handling of remainders is not less difficult and not less vital. Domestic happiness or misery; our entire social contact, with all it brings to us of inner growth or decay, are here in question. A man and woman joined in marriage discover, on the farther side of

the great venture, that their dreams of each other and what their union would bring them, were partly illusions. Honeymoons are the queerest of histories, at times the most tragical. A high, impressionable nature finds in the closer intimacy a lack, a failure of response to its own highest. The union is not the complete, the perfect thing that was imagined. Or it may be worse than that. What then? What if it be the worst? Shall despair be the attitude? That would mean another union, the union of cowardice and folly. For in what is left there is room always for a brave soul. Always is there a remainder to work on, a remainder in yourself and in your companion. Keeping steadily to that; shutting the eye to all else; concentrating on this residue of good all the energy of love and all the patience of hope; here is the road—straight and narrow may be, demon-haunted, skirting at a dozen places the precipice—which, nevertheless, persevered in, will bring you through to victory.

There is no better reading than the remnant histories. And they meet us everywhere. The Church of England has had hardly a brighter ornament than “holy George Herbert.” But the author of “The Temple” and “The Country Parson” entered the ministry in the first instance as a kind of remainder. He had planned for himself the life of the court and of diplomacy. It was only when the death of James I, and his patron the Duke of Richmond destroyed his hopes of preferment that he thought of taking Orders. We know how this *pis aller* became the starting-point of a consuming spiritual passion, and gave Anglicanism

one of its closest approaches to sainthood. Thinking of Herbert reminds us of his contemporary, Hooker, who, trapped into a marriage with a shrew, which lost him Oxford, quietude and, as it seemed, almost everything else, went on calmly working his remainder ; in his country parish delighting " to see God's blessings spring out of the earth," and there and elsewhere toiling on at the mighty book which was to establish his fame for ever. Wesley marries a termagant with dynamite enough in her to wreck half a dozen careers. But Wesley refuses to be wrecked. If domestic peace is gone, his apostleship is left him, and he makes something of that !

We have so far dealt with remainders that are such by mere subtraction. This and that have been taken from us, or have been kept out of our reach, and the problem has been to do our best without them. But there are remainders of a different and subtler order, remainders which are deposits. In chemistry it is the remainder that counts. All this mass of pitchblende rock, all these processes of crushing and grinding, of refining and solution, for the sake of so tiny a speck of radium that emerges at the end ! Human life is also a chemistry, with processes that are strangely similar. Our experiences, when we are through with them, are not done with. Their chief significance, one comes to think, is in the deposits they leave. What queer remainders drop, as final result, from our daily doings ! How comes it that an orgie leaves this precise taste in the mouth the day after ? Singular, when we think of it ! The flavour is clearly not of the

man's own willing. Freewill has gone into the choice of his pleasures, but there is no freewill in the deposit from them.

There is, indeed, nothing more awesome, yet at the same time more loftily inspiring, than this question of remainders, where also they are extracts. We touch here so manifestly on a Will outside our own. When we note the sense of degradation yielded—with the certainty of a chemical result—by certain courses, and the inner exaltation, the high sense of achievement and inner progress which follow upon others, there is no escaping the conclusion that here we stand on the confines of a spiritual kingdom whose rule it is impossible to escape, a kingdom which includes every soul of us in its purpose, a purpose whose end is not yet. Life itself, then, it seems, is a process, carried on in its turn for the extract it will yield. The process is what we are here and now. The extract is what we shall be in the world invisible.

THE END.

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